39

MODERN FIX

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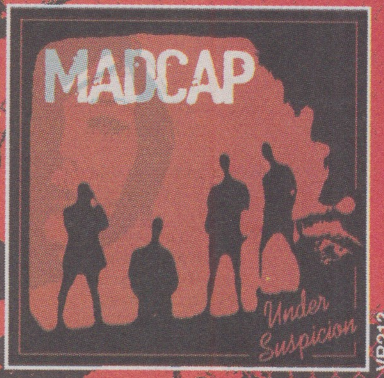

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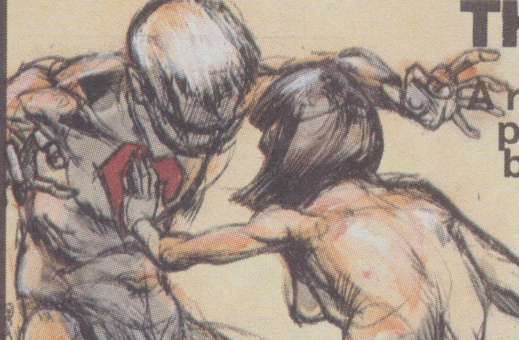

A raging, schizophrenic blend of pitch-perfect vocal melodies, brutal breakdowns and killer pop hooks.

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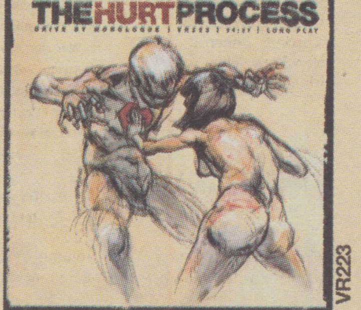

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Michael Bushman
Eric Huntington

Managing Editor
Kris Somera

Graphic Design
Michael Todd
Eric Huntington
Ryan Thomas
Jake Thill

Editors
Rebecca Martin
Alisa Abrenica
Nina

Photographers
Aaron Seligman
Jeff McKibben
Sandra E.

Online
Albert Finkerstein

Sketches
Brandon Hunsaker
Seamus P Heffernan
Sean Dietrich

Staff
Dick
Richard Ellis
Brian Greenaway
M. Young
Thomas Maxwell
Tom Schulte
James Wright
Gordon Downs
Rebecca Martin
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Thomas Cooper
PRI
Zack
M.E.G.

Contributors
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Jeff Skruck
Stacy Brandt
Hugh Knight
Campbell
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smc
Melanie Kellogg
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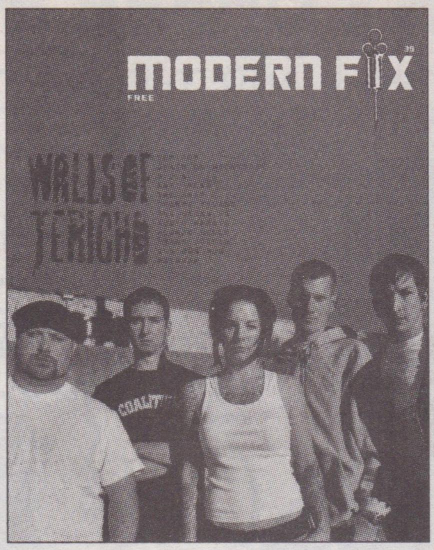

God brought down the Walls of Jericho with a thunderous vengeance. How appropriately named is this Michigan unit. Tearing apart the middle ground between metal and hardcore, the music attacks on most levels. Aggression battles against speed, but a structure of determined riffage and empowering breakdowns elevates the band above the simpler approach of many of their hardcore peers. And the throat for this musical assault is a hard as nails girl from the Midwest named Candace Kucsulain.

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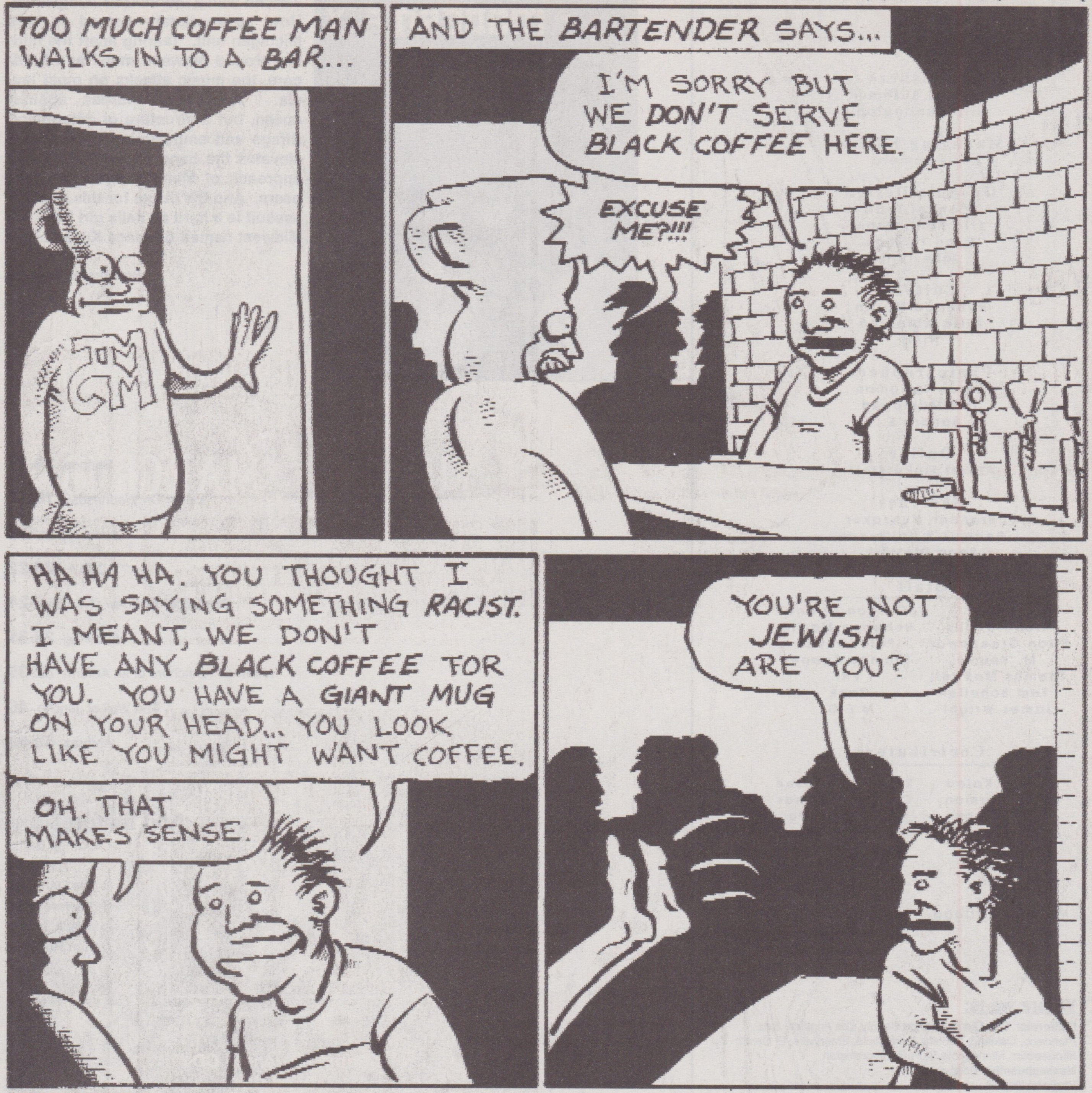
"We might as well require a man to wear still the coat which fitted him when a boy as civilized society to remain forever under the regimen of their barbarous ancestors."

- Thomas Jefferson

TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN

BY SHANNON WHEELER


TOO MUCH COFFEE MAN WALKS IN TO A *BAR*...
TM CM
AND THE *BARTENDER* SAYS...
I'M SORRY BUT WE *DON'T* SERVE *BLACK COFFEE* HERE.
EXCUSE ME?!!!
HA HA HA. YOU THOUGHT I WAS SAYING SOMETHING *RACIST*. I MEANT, WE DON'T HAVE ANY *BLACK COFFEE* FOR YOU. YOU HAVE A *GIANT MUG* ON YOUR HEAD... YOU LOOK LIKE YOU MIGHT WANT COFFEE.
OH. THAT MAKES SENSE.
YOU'RE NOT *JEWISH* ARE YOU?

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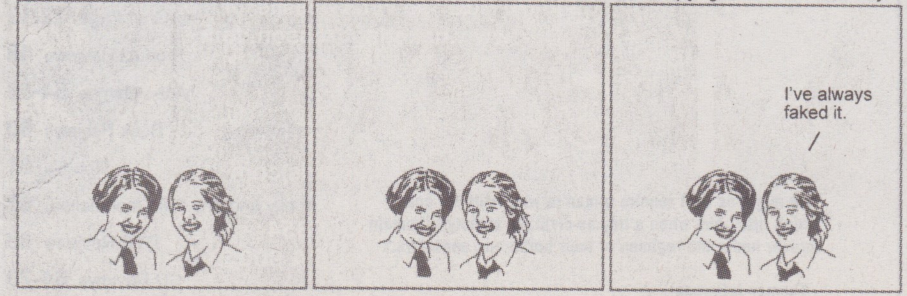
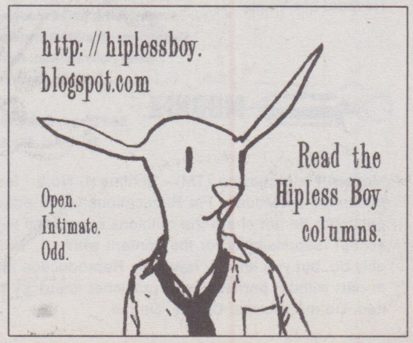

I've always faked it.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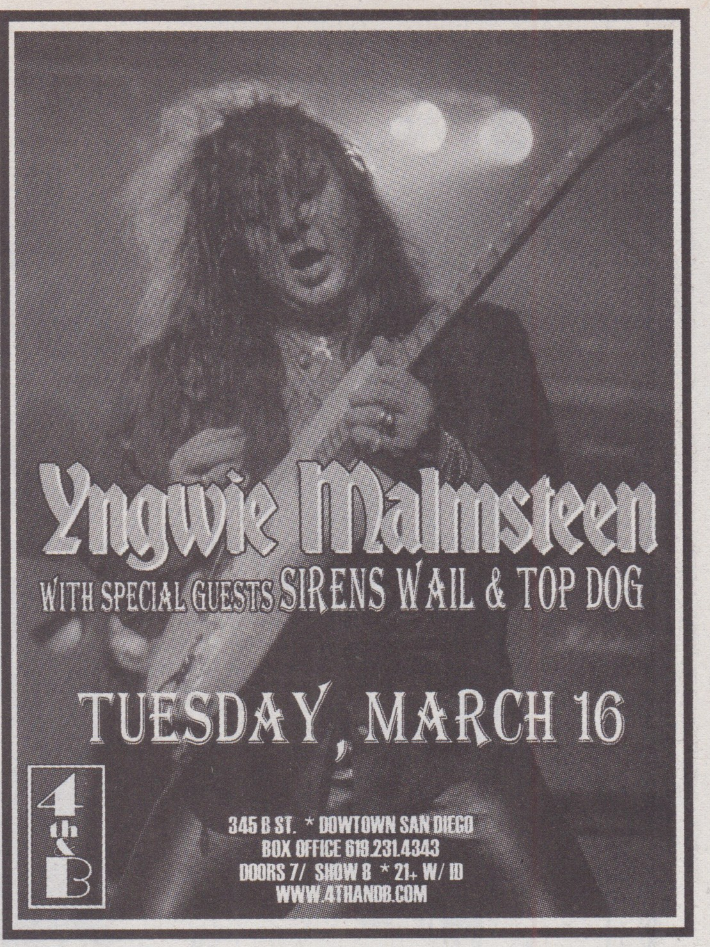
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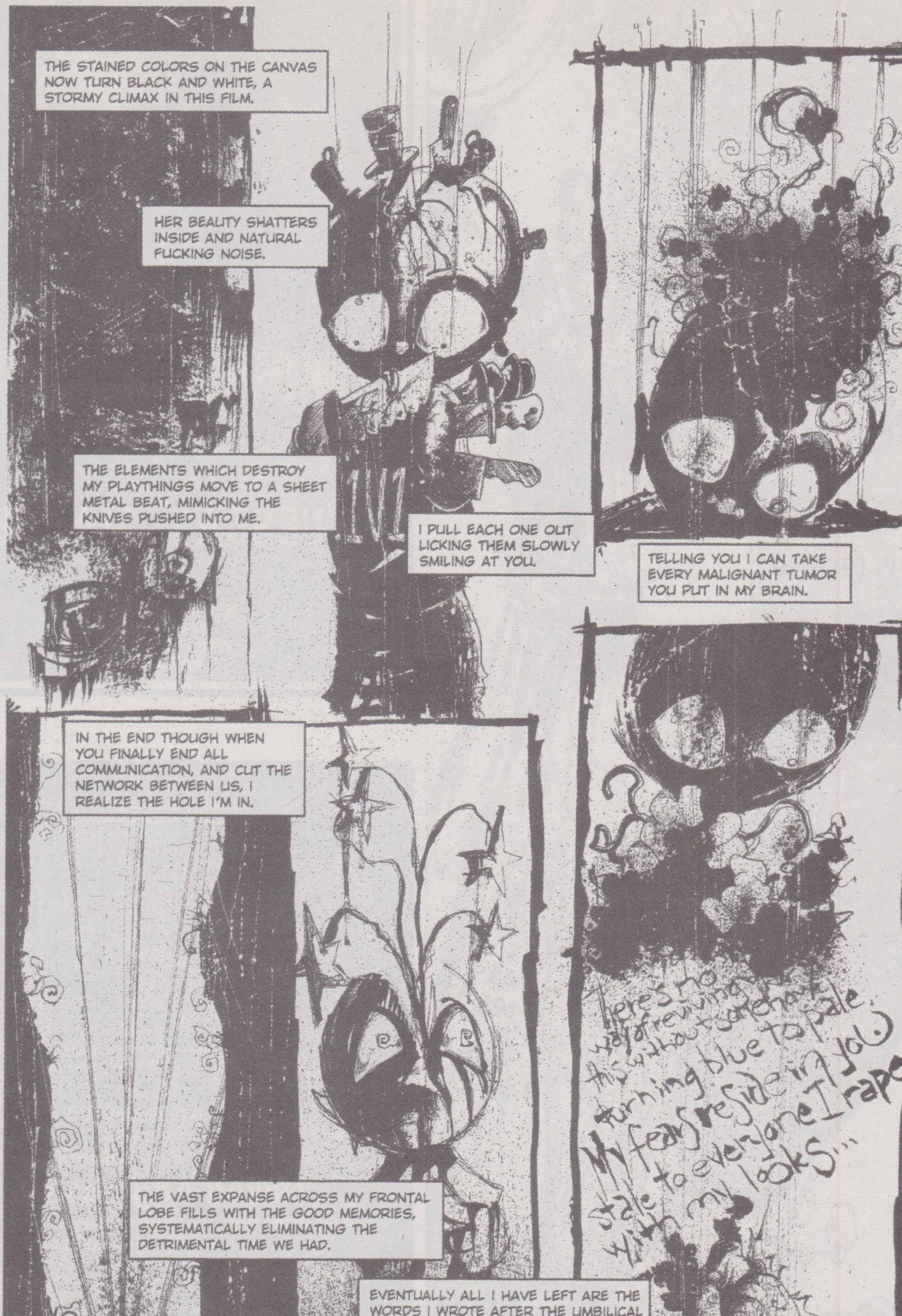
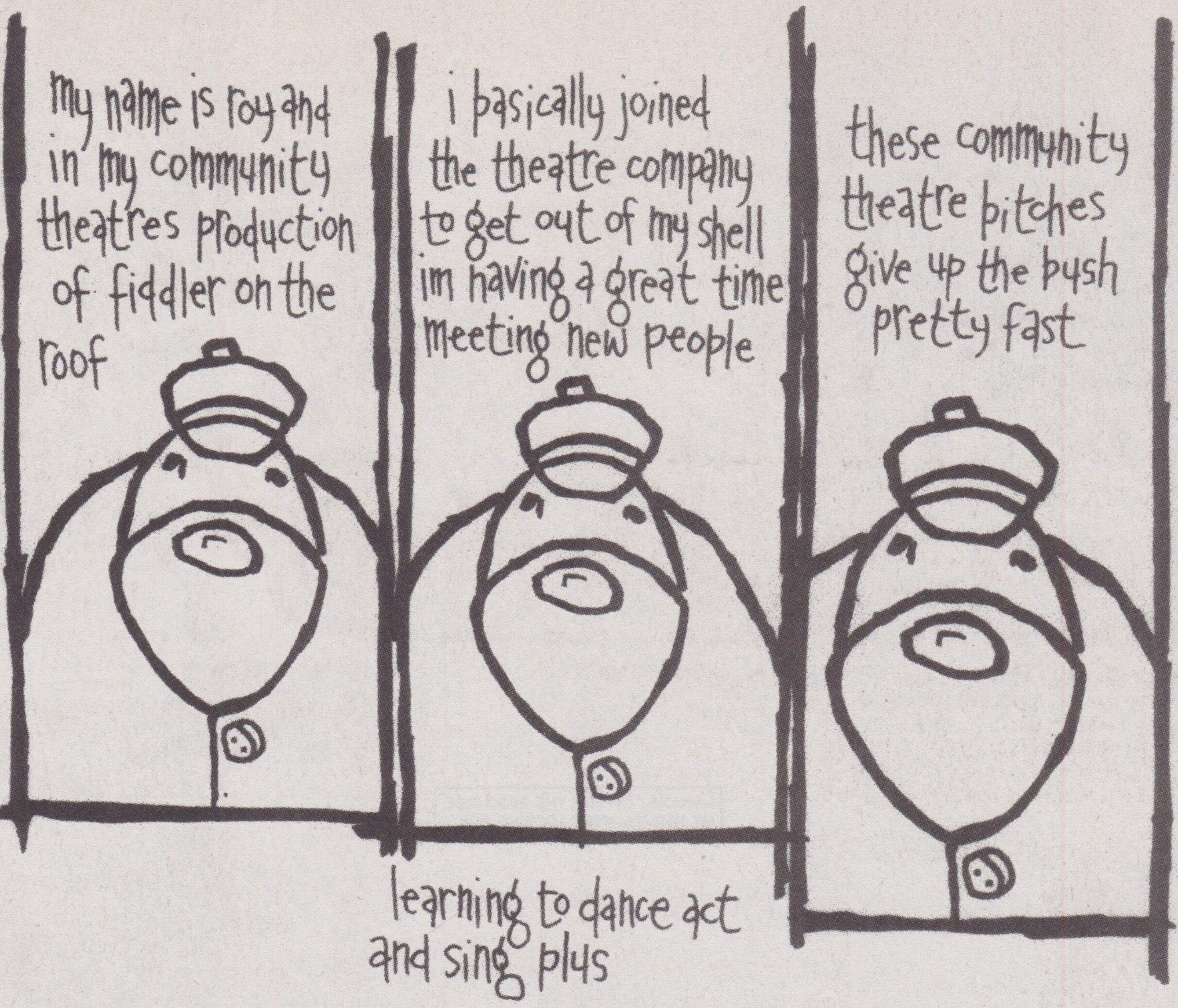
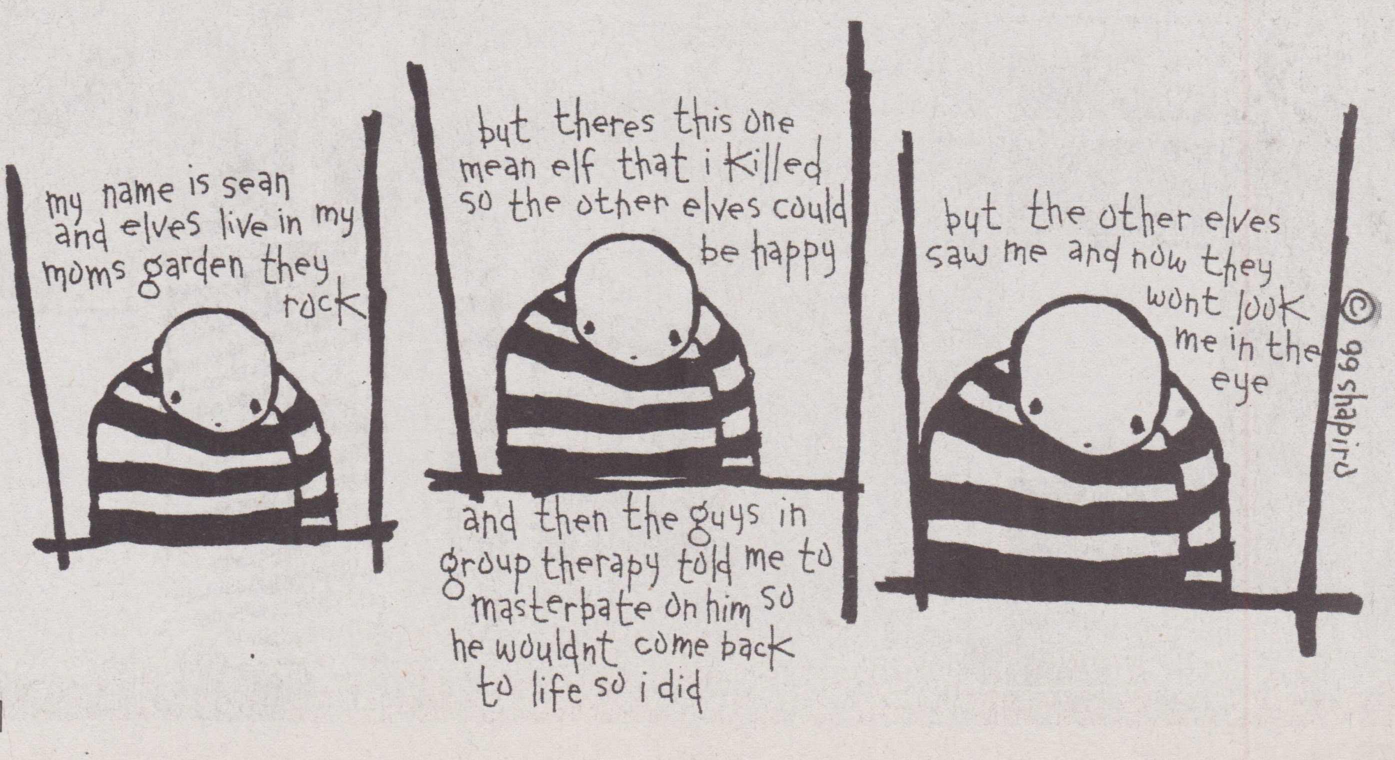

THE STAINED COLORS ON THE CANVAS NOW TURN BLACK AND WHITE, A STORMY CLIMAX IN THIS FILM.
HER BEAUTY SHATTERS INSIDE AND NATURAL FUCKING NOISE.
THE ELEMENTS WHICH DESTROY MY PLAYTHINGS MOVE TO A SHEET METAL BEAT, MIMICKING THE KNIVES PUSHED INTO ME.
I PULL EACH ONE OUT LICKING THEM SLOWLY SMILING AT YOU.
TELLING YOU I CAN TAKE EVERY MALIGNANT TUMOR YOU PUT IN MY BRAIN.
IN THE END THOUGH WHEN YOU FINALLY END ALL COMMUNICATION, AND CUT THE NETWORK BETWEEN US, I REALIZE THE HOLE I'M IN.
THE VAST EXPANSE ACROSS MY FRONTAL LOBE FILLS WITH THE GOOD MEMORIES, SYSTEMATICALLY ELIMINATING THE DETRIMENTAL TIME WE HAD.
There's no way of reviving this without somehow turning blue to pale. My fears reside in you stale to everyone I rape with my looks...
EVENTUALLY ALL I HAVE LEFT ARE THE WORDS I WROTE AFTER THE UMBILICAL CORD WAS CUT, MY HEART IN A FREE FALL, INCREASING IN SPEED AS IT TURNS TO A HARDER ROCK...

MY VOMIT OFFERS THE RECOURSE
MY NERVES WERE LOOKING FOR.


my name is roy and in my community theatres production of fiddler on the roof
i basically joined the theatre company to get out of my shell im having a great time meeting new people
learning to dance act and sing plus
these community theatre bitches give up the bush pretty fast


my name is sean and elves live in my moms garden they rock
but theres this one mean elf that i killed so the other elves could be happy
and then the guys in group therapy told me to masterbate on him so he wouldnt come back to life so i did
but the other elves saw me and now they wont look me in the eye
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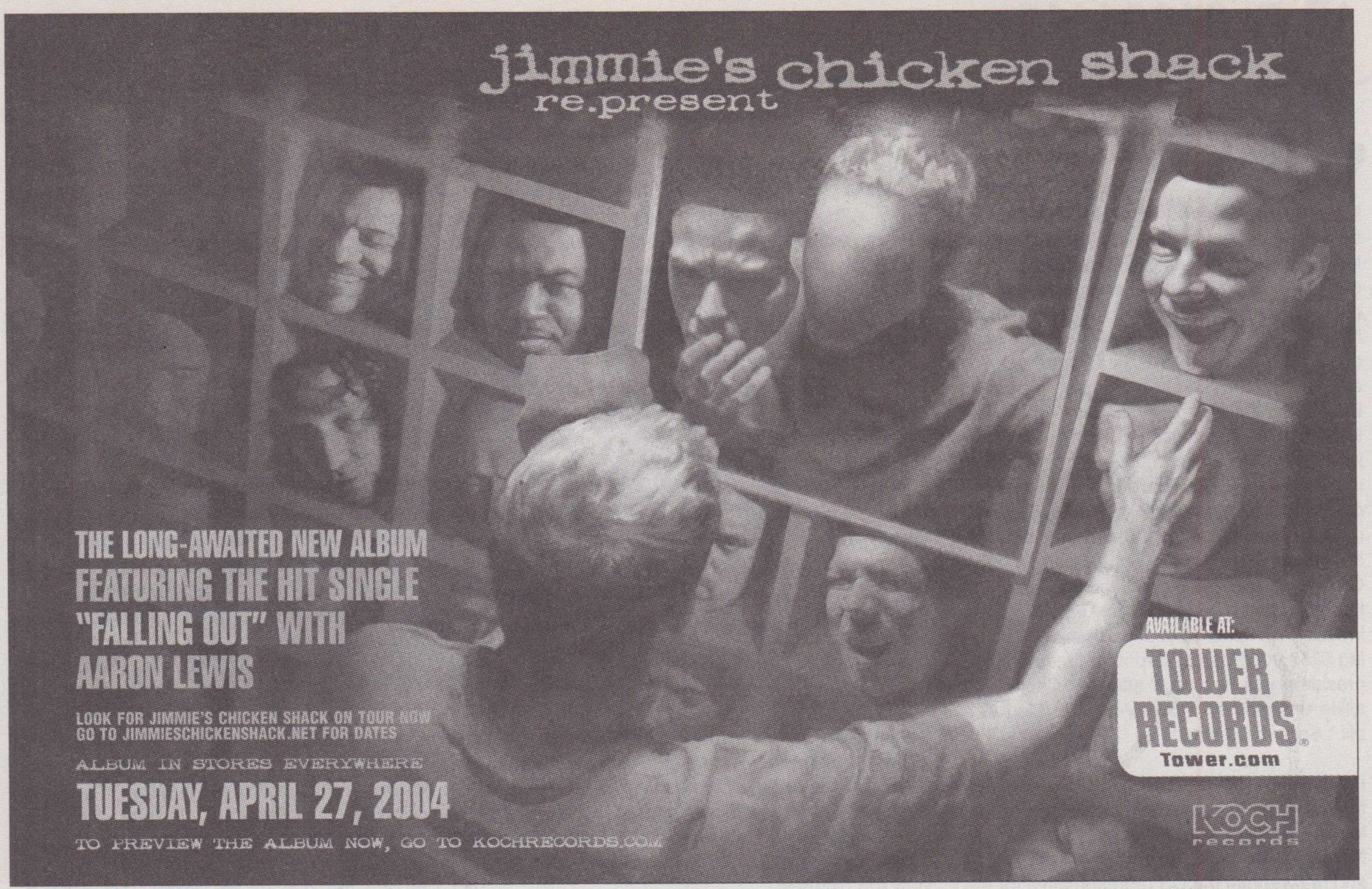

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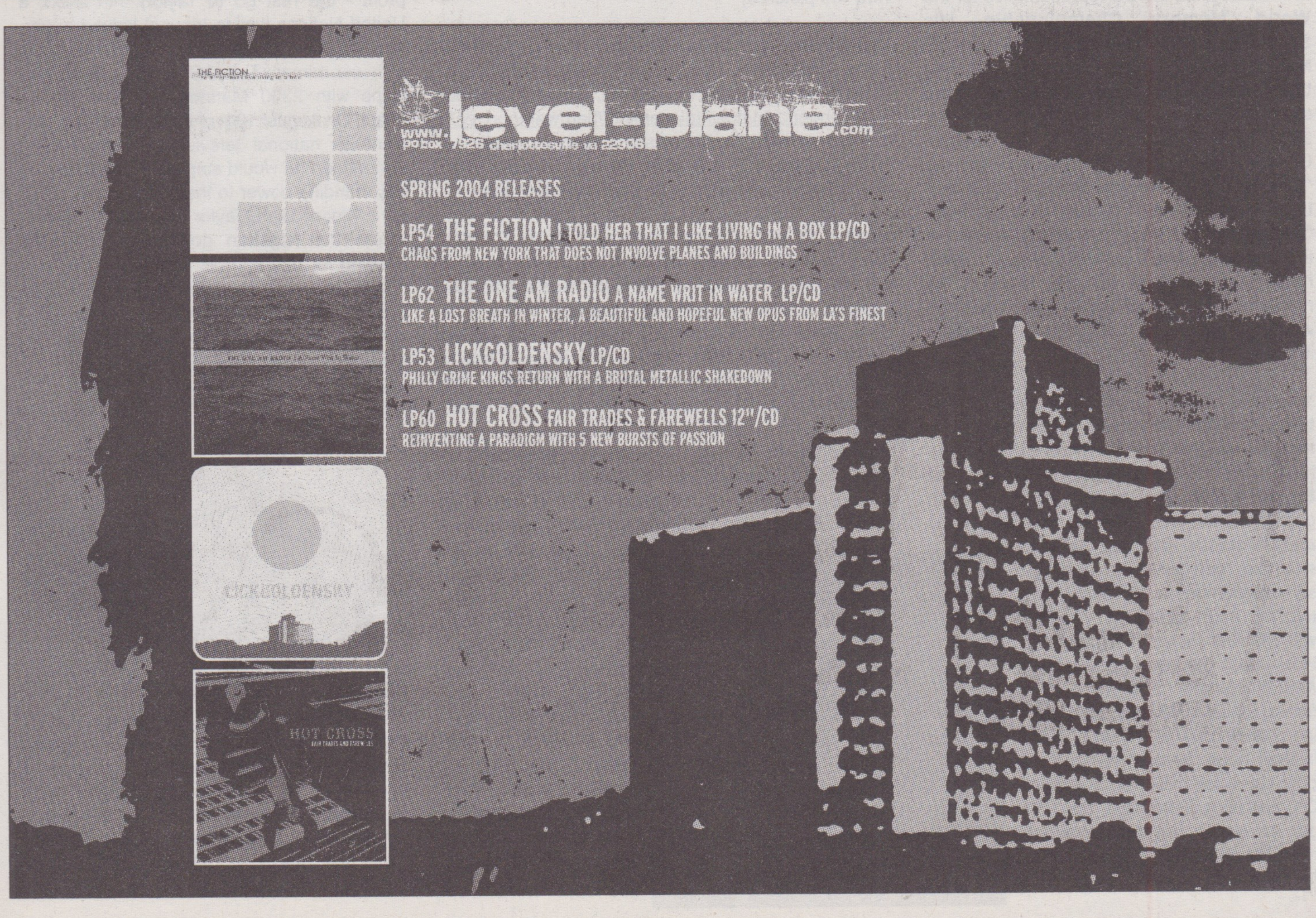

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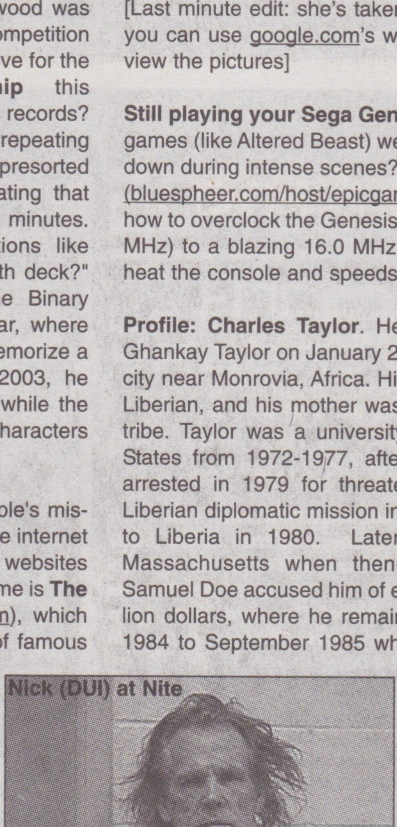
by pr!

MoveOn.org's been quite busy as of late. In between the controversy surrounding the AD that was refused to air during the Super Bowl and placing **anti-Bush advertisements** in over a dozen states, you'd think they wouldn't have much free time. Not true, as made obvious by the new(er) website, Misleader.org, a site dedicated to showcasing president Bush's statements. An example? "President Bush and his Republican allies have taken at least $42 million in contributions from the drug industry since 2000. That's about $28,000 per day or $1,100 per hour, 24 hours a day and 7 days a week to President Bush since 2000 - a hefty salary, even for a well-heeled lobbyist. On one night in 2002 alone, the president and his allies raked in $30 million from the drug industry, with pharmaceutical companies paying $250,000 "for red-carpet treatment" by the president just two days after his Capitol Hill allies unveiled an industry-backed Medicare bill." See what I mean?

Hey, where were you when the United States Memory Championships went down? Stoned, looking for your keys? Scott Hagwood was there and he won, ousting the competition and making him the US representative for the **World Memory Championship** this September in Malaysia. Some of his records? Memorizing 107 random words and repeating them back in exact order. Taking a presorted deck of 52 cards and then recreating that series with another deck in two minutes. Giving correct answers to questions like "What was the 12th card in the 25th deck?" Let's hope he does better at the Binary Competition this year then last year, where the competitor has a half hour to memorize a random string of 1s and 0s. In 2003, he remembered 552, coming in 12th, while the winner remembered 3,009 binary characters in a row.



Nick (DUI) at Nite

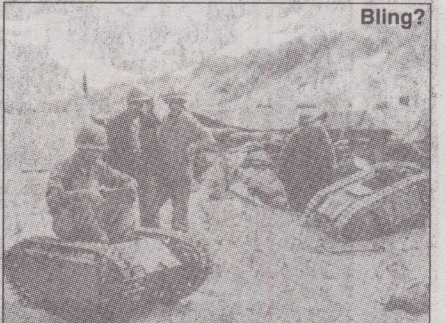
You know what's funny? Other people's mistakes. And what better way to use the internet then to point them out, as millions of websites have proven. A particular favorite to me is **The Smoking Gun** (thesmokinggun.com), which gets the inside scoop for all sorts of famous and infamous people. Say, for example, you'd like to read the sworn testimony a 13 year old boy told the court about his 'playtime' with Michael Jackson? It's up there. How about the court case against Ashton Kutcher and MTV (after filming a pilot in which a unsuspecting pilot discovered a murder victim in their hotel, freaked out and are now suing for millions)? It's there. Oh, and Nick Nolte says, don't forget to check out their celebrity mugshot collection. It's the coolest! In case you haven't heard, Bob Heironimus, whose film of a huge, gorilla/man beast (later dubbed **Bigfoot**) walking thru the woods ignited controversy for the last thirty-sox years, has finally admitted to the video being a fake in his new book. Surprisingly enough, nobody cares.

A really interesting photo journal, taken by an unnamed Ukrainian novice photojournalist takes web viewers thru the **abandon city of Chernobyl**, in Russia, where their nuclear plant melted down in 1986 and killed between 40k-400k, depending on whose stats you believe. From what I've read, the U.S.S.R. didn't notify people of the dangers of radiation exposure until it was too late; the local hospital was open for a full thirty days after meltdown (until the head doctor died of cancer). It's interesting and sometimes disturbing... houses left exactly how they were eighteen years ago & hulls of cars, tanks and helicopters littered on the streets. (angelfire.com/extreme4/kiddofspeed/page2.html) [Last minute edit: she's taken down her website, but you can use google.com's web cache system to still view the pictures]

Outside of Chernobyl's hospital

Still playing your Sega Genesis? Wish some of the games (like Altered Beast) weren't plagues with slowdown during intense scenes? Well, a nerd figured out (bluespheer.com/host/epicgaming//hardware/md_oc/) how to overclock the Genesis processor (normally 7.6 MHz) to a blazing 16.0 MHz. It's safe, doesn't overheat the console and speeds up those slow games.

Profile: Charles Taylor. He was born as Charles Ghankay Taylor on January 28, 1948, in Arthington, a city near Monrovia, Africa. His father was a Americo-Liberian, and his mother was a member of the Gola tribe. Taylor was a university student in the United States from 1972-1977, after which he was briefly arrested in 1979 for threatening to take over the Liberian diplomatic mission in New York. He returned to Liberia in 1980. Later, he was arrested in Massachusetts when then-Liberian president of Samuel Doe accused him of embezzling almost a million dollars, where he remained in prison from May 1984 to September 1985 while awaiting extradition. He escaped prison and is thought to have gone to Libya. Between 1985-1988, it's known that Taylor trained at terrorist camps run by Moammar Al Qadhafi and al-Qaeda. In 1989 Taylor launched an armed uprising from Ivory Coast, and when I say uprising, I mean uprising. From roving gangs with AK-47's (some dressed up in wigs and women's clothing to scare people, which it did), Taylor used his shock and awe tactics to literally rape Liberia: estimated numbers are over 150,000 Liberians murdered, countless mutilated and 25,000 women and girls raped. In 1990, he executed president Doe, but not before cutting off Doe's ear and forcing him to eat it. His regime became official in 1997, when he became president of Liberia with a landslide victory (which many say was due to ballot-stuffing and violent intimidation). Proving that you can't change a man with a fancy title, he continued his abuse of power as president, supporting war with neighboring countries, allowing known criminals residence (and hiring some) and became the founder of a major diamond smuggling ring. What was so special about Liberia? Originally founded by freed slaves (tho it's estimated that only 5% of the population is related) it has valuable resources like iron, rubber and timber (of which the people receive less then 10% of the profit - the rest go to Taylor). In 2003, a United Nations justice tribunal issued a warrant for the President's arrest, charging him with war crimes. The U.S. brought three warships with 2300 Marines into view of the coast. On August 10th of 2003, Charles Taylor went on national television in Liberia and announced he would step down the following day, handing power to the nation's vice president, Moses Blah. Taylor then flew to Nigeria where the Nigerian government provided housing for him and his entourage. Taylor is now on Interpol's Most Wanted list for "crimes against humanity, grave breaches of the 1949 Geneva Conventions." Nigeria, which is currently 'holding' Taylor, has stated that it will not submit to Interpol's demands.



Bling?

We found the above picture quite interesting. It's labeled, from a old newspaper clipping, "**Nazi robot explosive beetles** examined by Navy men", so we're guessing these were some crazy little robot tanks that the Nazi's planned to use as suicide drones... pretty crazy, eh? Hey, they look cooler then those goddamn motorized scooters.

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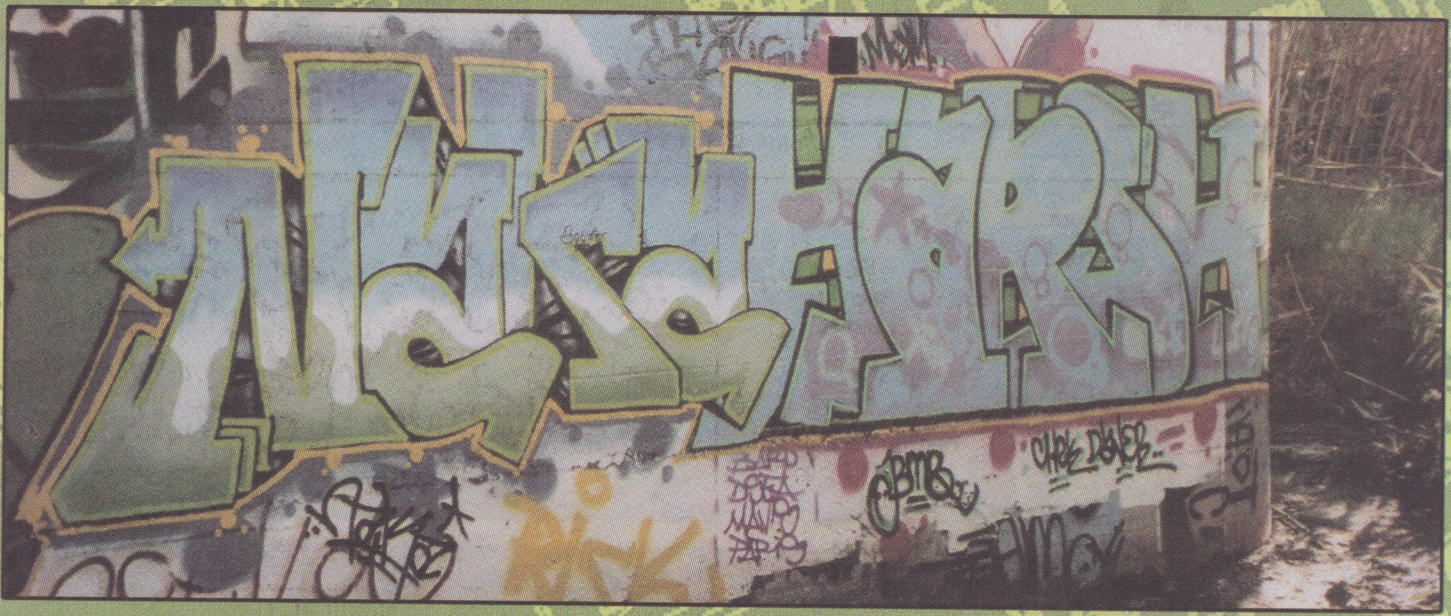
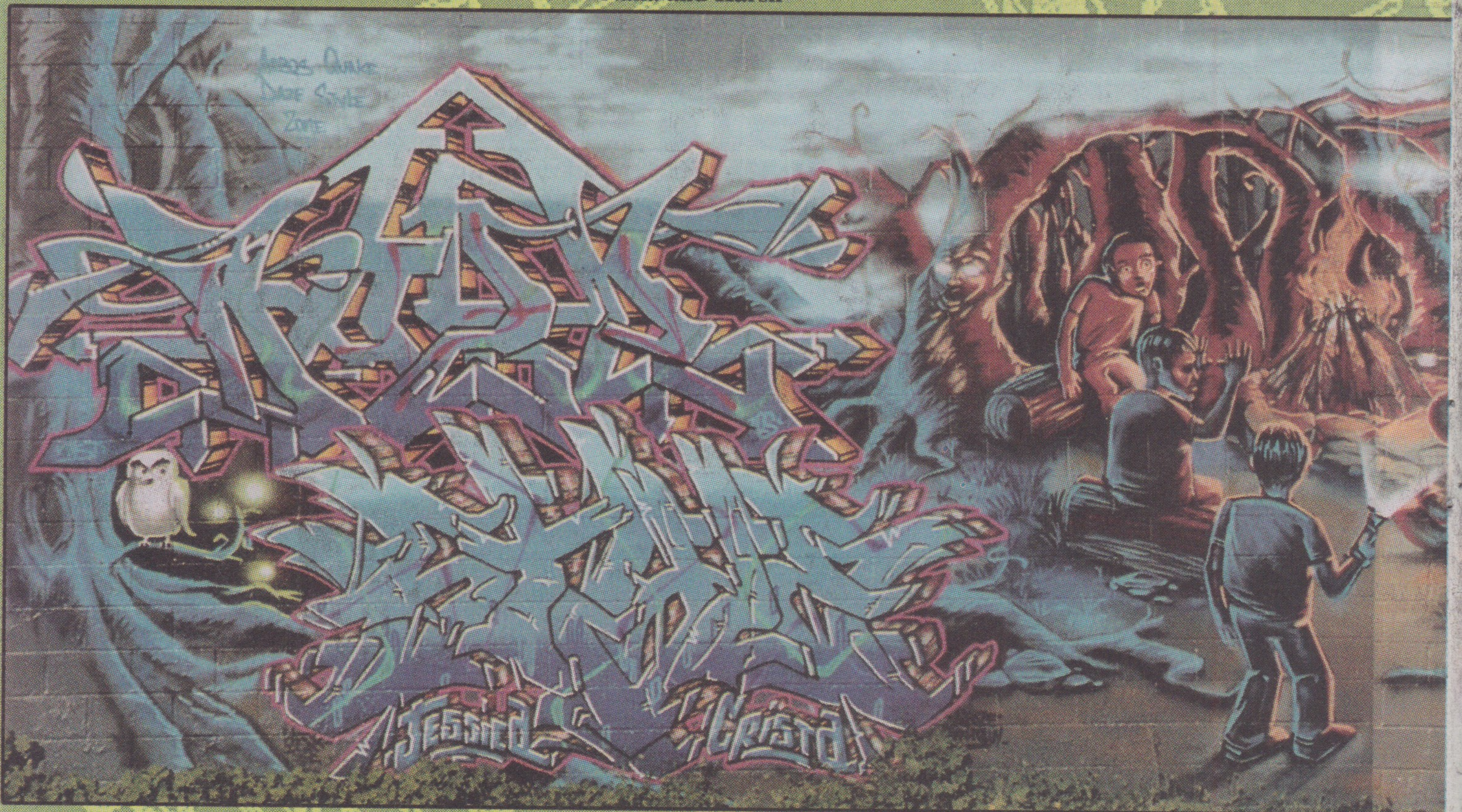
THE GRAFF PAGE

words and flix . . . m. young

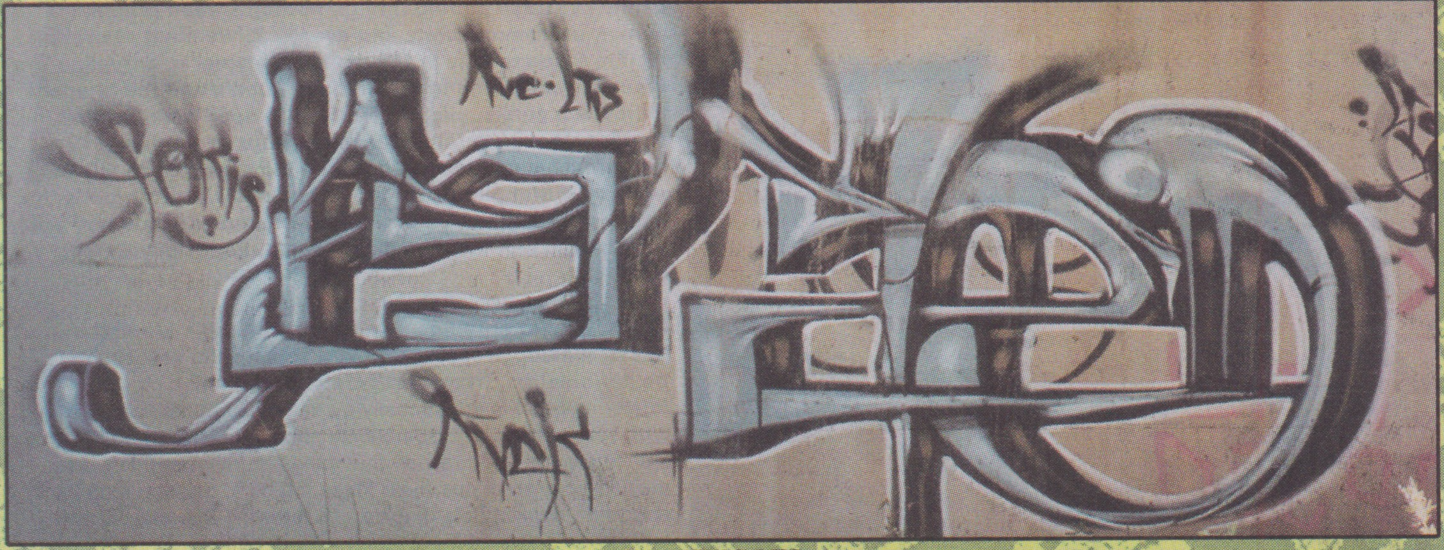
It always seems as if more graffiti sprouts up around the time that the weather changes from winter to spring. With the warm changing of seasons comes a new energy that has with it the feeling of new life. Motivated by this energy, paint hungry graffiti writers are prepared with their cans in one hand and their crumpled up sketch in the other. Toting my camera at my side I returned to some familiar freeway overpasses where I knew that some freshly done pieces would probably exist. Sure enough, I came upon these expected pieces and photographed them for you to view. In addition I found out about this clean and masterfully done production in Linda Vista, Ca. Check it all out and stay tuned for more graffiti coverage.



Naka and Harsh



a big production by Daze, Style, Aeroz, Zone and Quake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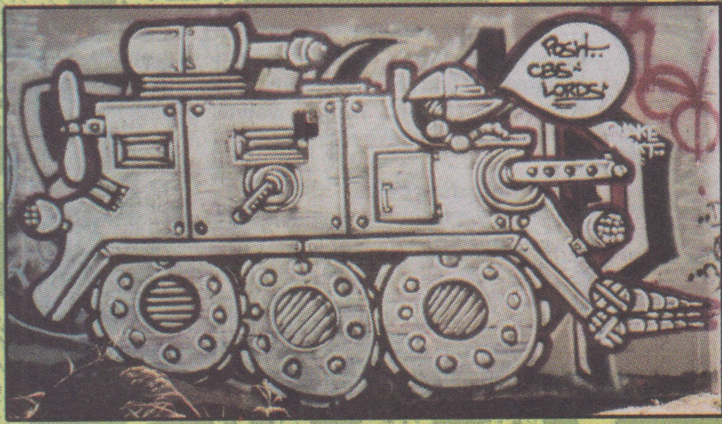
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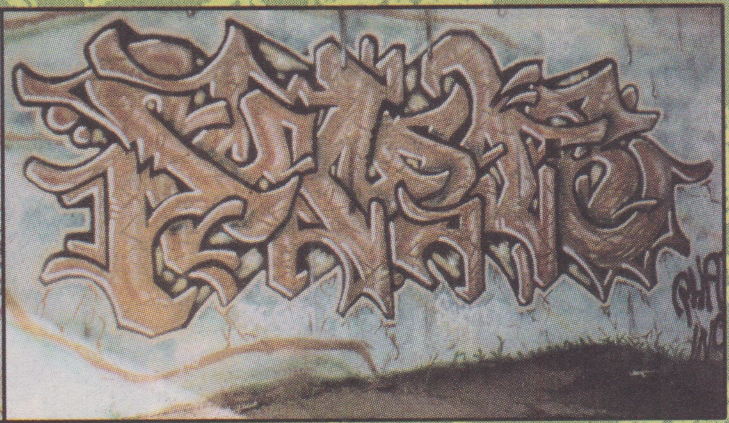

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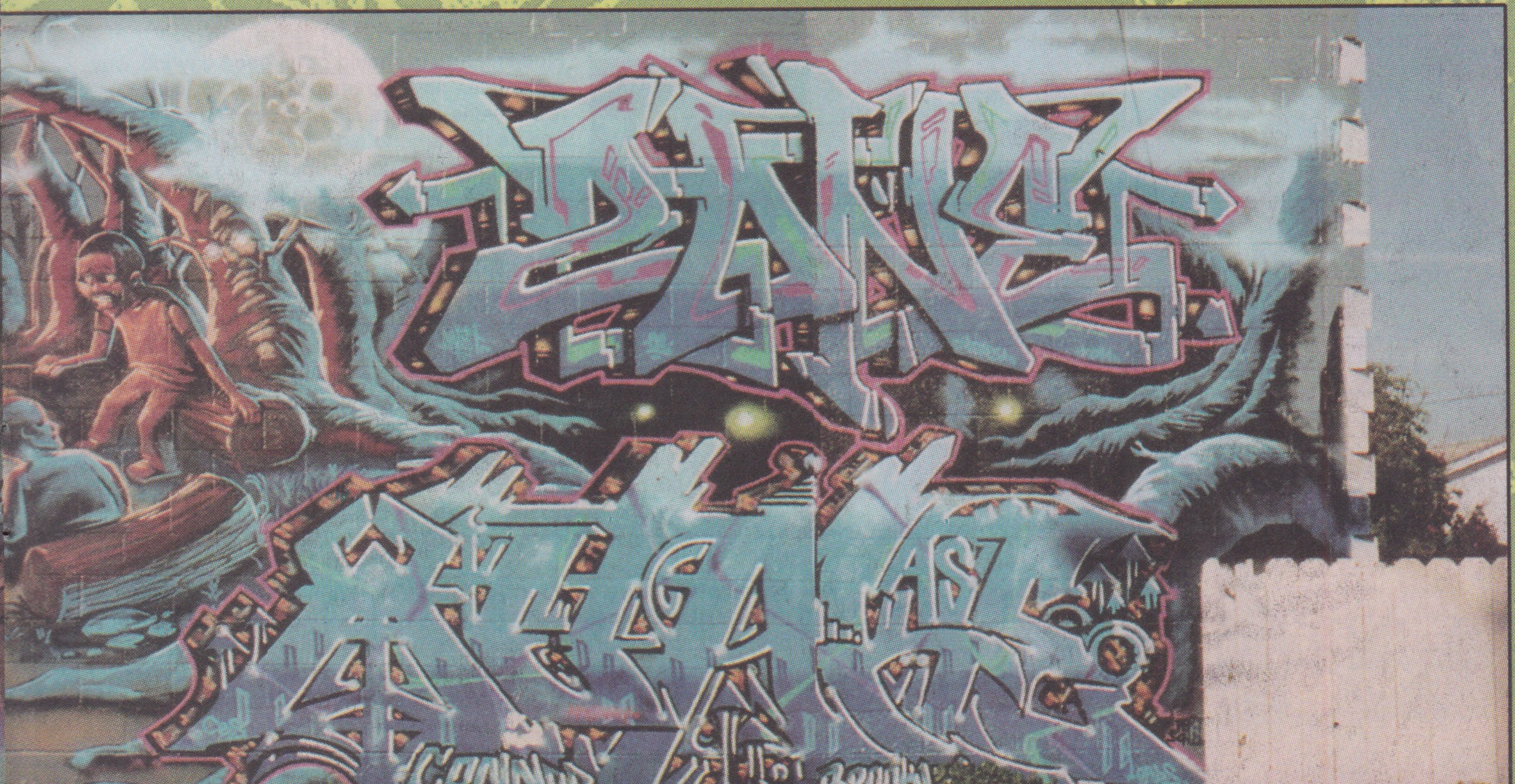
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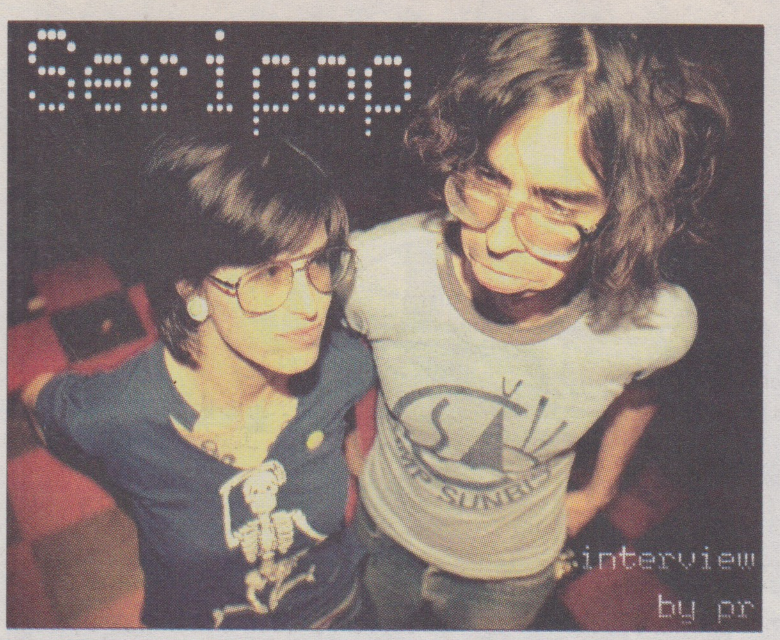
Seripop

interview by pr



Lately I've been getting into gatherting screen printed poster art from concerts and events. While most of my collection tends to stay in the poster container is arrived, a few grace my wall. Among the Lindsey Kuhn's and the Shepard Fairey is a single, slightly crinkled Seripop creation that someone gave me. After staring at it for two months, I thought I'd track 'em down. Chloe Lum decided to talk to me, and if that picture on the left tells you anything, it's that her and fellow Seripop'er Yannick Desranleau look way better in those clothes then I ever would. Especially Chloe. She's hot.

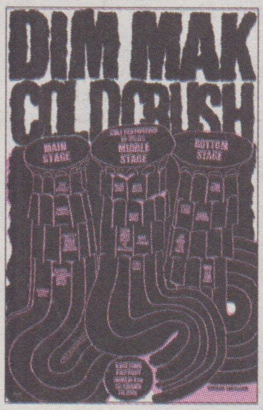
Chloe, I'm not sure how familiar most people are in the poster making process. Can you explain the process of poster creation, from start/scratch to finish?
Poster creation is done mostly by hand with pencil, pen, ink and type specimens... and sometimes photos as well. The two of us just sit around and draw or glue things together and talk a lot, making doodles of our dumb ideas, arguing, passing crap back and forth, drinking lots of juice and throwing the cats off the table a lot. Then we make Xeroxes... once the main art and text is done we scan everything and paste it up in Photoshop, making good use of the layering function to make sure our color layers line up well. Then, we print out each layer separately to make our films... Screens are prepped and we screen-print the posters usually editions of 150-300. We get everything cut by a giant robot and then it's ready to ship out.

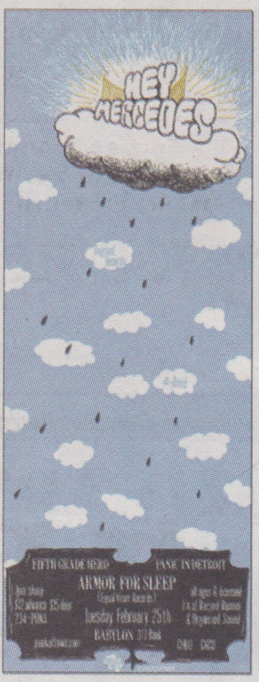
Robots are cool.
Often we have our bandmate Chris Taylor and our printing assistant Matt Moroz come over and draw with us to make things more exciting. Then, if we fell really crazy after sitting at the table drawing for several hours and talking shit, we'll watch a DVD together. That is the extent of our social life. We rarely leave the house apart from being at the print shop.

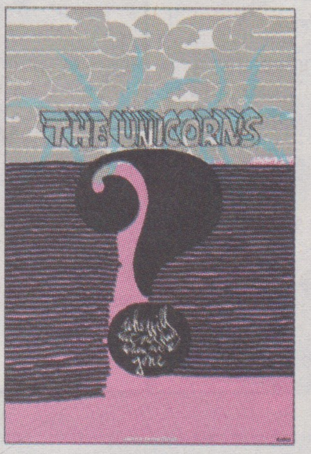
What route would you recommend for the fledging artist?
Fledging artists should get a good day job, buy some gear, save up enough cash to live for a few months, quit said job and get to work... and be prepared to work a lot. Hours should be long, production rate should be big. Many people should be talked to and life should be lived as cheaply as possible.

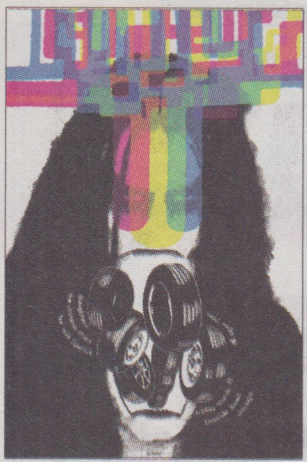
So how many hours do you work?
We generally work 12- 16 hours a day, 7 days a week and we are only barely starting to make money now after doing this full time for two years doing art and trying to make a living off of it leave little to no time for anything else. That includes eating and bathing. I guess the most important thing is drive and ambition, coupled with a really hardline work ethic. Talents comes third and selling yourself fourth. If you are an artist planning to work in the music scene it's really important that you fucking love it and love the people you do stuff for.

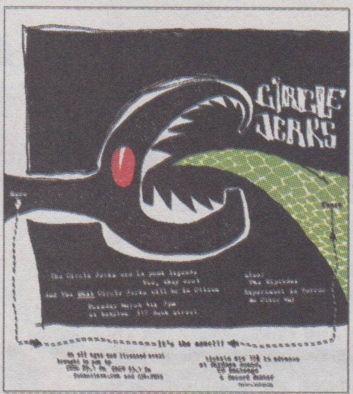
How formidable is the competition? Do you feel like you compete with other artists/companies?
The thing with art is that's it's "cool" so a lot of designers... and people who think they are designers... wanna do it. The hours are long, the pay is shit but everyone wants to get in there it seems. Almost anyone can get gigs doing it at a ocallevel if they are into doing stuff for local/regional acts. It's more when you start doing stuff nationally and internationally that the competition gets really fierce. There are a lot of talented people bidding on jobs and in order to get them you need to have a style people like and can relate to the music, work fast, deliver shit on time, talk to everyone and know everyone, get in good with the bands you do stuff for



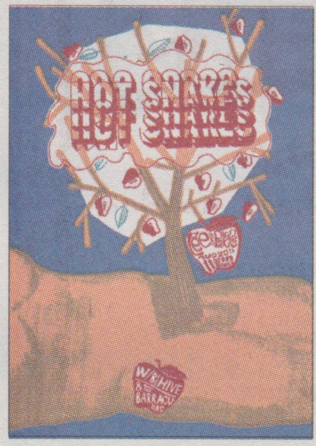


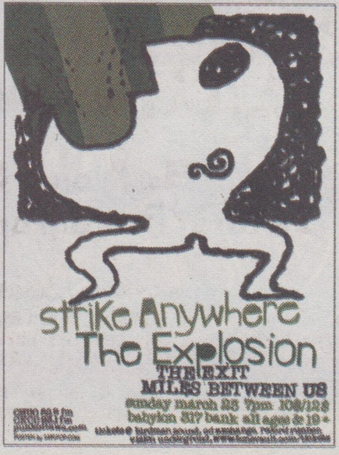






Both you and Yannick have crazy names. What's up with that?
We are crazy. We are also French Canadian!





and constantly be having new stuff to show as well as having a good presence online and at shows. Weirdly enough, there is quite a large scene of poster art dorks out there and most of us know each other from gigposters.com, the bi-yearly gig poster convention flat stock, traveling or whatnot, so, if you are friendly with the other artists doing the same type of stuff as you, for the same type of music there is a mutual baking off. People help each get gigs all the time and collaborate on work. Also many of us set up art shows together.

Have you ever turned someone down for custom work, for any reason?
We turn down custom work daily. More often than not it's because we just don't have time or because the client is trying to bargain with us on our fee. We don't bargain with strangers, ever. Sometimes it's for shit we just don't like, so we politely say "no thanks" and pass it on to another artist. We really prefer working with people we know and/or bands, events... things that we like and respect.

Cool. Would you do design for large corperations (Coke, Nike, Microsoft, tobacco/alcohol companies)? Is there a line?
So far we haven't had any offers from major corps and we aren't really expecting them. Doing a job like that would make us feel uncomfortable but if the cash is really good it might be awfully hard to say no; i guess we'd look at it case by case. What is the company, what is their history, how much creative control do we have, what fee are they offering, how broke are we, etc. We don't believe that big companies are inherently evil but many are and many more definitely don't have the public's best interest at heart. Right now the only non-music related corporate stuff we are doing is for a vegan show distribution company, which is run out of the guy's apartment.

Do you get offers for poster idea's or custom posters to duplicate?
We get asked but we don't. We only print our own designs... more rewarding and less bullshit involved.

What country do you sell the most posters to?
Most of our posters sell in America. We sell online and in record stores, comic stores and some art galleries. We also occasionally table at fests/showcases or at industry conventions, and on the road selling and showing our prints. We also retail stuff in Singapore of all places.

I heard that you're in a band and make a zine.
We are both in the noise rock band 'Aids Wolf' and involved with various zines, most notably 'Black Rainbow'

What's up with your new prime minister? He sounds like a dick.
He's basically a right wing fucknut who wasn't elected.

Is there a set price for custom poster creation? What are some of the factors?
Our pricing is complicated. Factors include our personal relationship with the client, the scale of the event or album, the amount of freedom we get to do what we want, how busy we are, how much work is there involved, bla bla bla. We often just make it up.

Anything coming up that we'd see a Seripop signature on?
Um everything? A whole lotta posters and record covers for an Albatross, poster series for Death From Above, covers of a few magazines and a whole lotta "art" stuff we are doing for some gallery shows we have coming up in Chicago, Toronto, Providence and here. Um... lots of magazine illustrations, some randon junk, hip hop record covers, t-shirt line.

Who would win in a fight, Lemmy from Motorhead or God?
Well since God doesn't exist , Lemmy would just be punching the air. He'd get really dizzy, fall down and pass out; therefore, God would win

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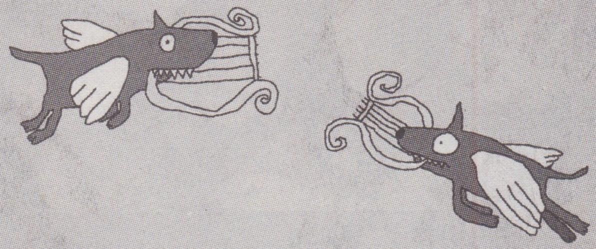

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DEATH ON WEDNESDAY

"NO MONEY, NO CAR, NO JOB, BUT I'M IN A BAND."

by Richie Lauridsen

No money, no car, no job, but I'm in a band. The slogan seems to speak out at the world's expectations of success as a whole. In a world where status and material possessions seem to dictate worth, many extend the comment to other areas of life, like a large home or a permanent place in the infamous nine-to-five world. And though the world may be hell-bent on their successful criteria, Death on Wednesday drafts their own success story. Infusing rock n roll into a barrage of punk, pop, country and rockabilly, taking cues from influences spanning from the Misfits to Morrissey, DOW are an up and coming four piece that pride themselves on a powerful, explosive live show. No matter which way their story seems to turn, the band will reside knowing that a tradition of hard work and dedication are what led them to earn the success they'll share.

After their incredibly energetic set at the Epicentre in San Diego, I sat down to get to know the band a little better. Here's what vocalist Nate Lawler, guitarist Jeff Saenz, bassist Kevin Smith and drummer Matt Rainwater had to say about a five year journey through the all-encompassing lifestyle of rock n roll through name changes, scene politics, and spare time.

Your original name was The Accidentals...er...
JS: Yeah, first it was The Accidentals, then The Redliners, then...

Why the name switches?
JS: Other bands had the names. Back then it was at the point where we were putting shit out ourselves and it didn't really matter much back then if there was a blues band in Florida by the name of The Redliners. But then it got to the point where we were actually going to put out a record on SideCho, which was our first release, "Buying The Lie." We couldn't release it as The Redliners because of that same reason, so we had to change the name...
NL: Just name changes, it was all good.

How was dealing with SideCho?
JS: It was awesome; it's now a subsidiary of Vagrant
NL: We've actually maintained a relationship with them,it's great. We're good friends with James and all the guys at Militia Group. They love us, we love them, it's rad.

I read somewhere that you guys were using a fill-in drummer...
NL: No, no, no, he's permanent now. This is Matt.

How was parting with your old drummer?
JS: It was extremely mutual, extremely peaceful. We're all still friends, it's totally cool.
NL: We were really lucky to find Matt.
MR: Yeah, you're lucky to have me.
NL: Him and Jeff have been friends since they were little kids. We try to keep a really tight-knit group.
JS: Matt and I started our first band together when we were 12 or 13.

What other bands have you guys been in?
MR: I played in a band called Bullets and Octane. Then there was Dead Radio, Second Guess, Bella Lugosi, Two Cents Short, Sister Charles, Ripjoint...[Nate laughs, Matt just keeps going...]
JS: Those are some terrible band names. Except maybe Bella Lugosi.

We got to talking about the band's influences and how that's come through to develop their sound.
NL: The sound of my voice comes through as like a Danzig, Morrissey, Smoking' Popes style...the music...
JS: We take from so many influences like The Stones, The Clash
MR: Ween and Slayer. [Everyone laughs]
NL: We try to keep it simple, simple rocking' power chords with strong melodies...We wanna be able to do a pop song, next to a punk rock song, next to a rock song. We don't fucking care. We want to play music we enjoy and avoid being nixed into any specific style.
JS: We want eclectic albums like "London Calling" or "Exile on Main Street."
MR: We don't' want to be classified as a pop-punk band or as an indie band. You just have to generalize it as rock n roll and let it all fall under that umbrella. That was the most profound thing I've said in two weeks.
NL: We're just gonna play what we're going to play, and if it works it works. That's basically our deal.

What do you guys do other than music?
JS: This is pretty much it, man. We get fired from jobs, work at record stores, restaurants, construction, teach guitar lessons before we leave again.
NL: Yeah, I'm pretty much fucked right now. I have no cash in my bank account...[Shows me a sticker on his wallet that says "No money, no car, no job, but I'm in a band."] This is our drummer right now. When all four or more of these fit you're like, "I'm really fucking rock n' roll."

What's the feeling you get realizing that music you put out influences others?
ALL: That's it, right on, that's it right there.
JS: That's why anybody starts a band in the first place, because they get inspired or influenced by someone else. You know what's really rad is that I grew up listening to bands like Social Distortion, UL, Face To Face and shit like that. Now-Trevor Keith produced our album, we toured with Social Distortion, Unwritten Law are friends of ours. And it's neat to feel like we're on a level with these guys.

Any records you've been listening to on tour?
KS: Bruce Springsteen.
JS: Yeah, we listen to the boss a lot.
KS: The Explosion...
JS: The new Rocket, the new AFI. Journey's greatest hits.

Any albums absolutely off limits?
JS: Some say The Murder City Devils, but Matt and I disagree.
KS, defensively: It's not that I don't like the band, just not as much as you guys.
JS: We don't listen to any Great White, we want a safe tour. Definitely no Dixie Chicks either.

Any closing remarks you'd like to leave our readers with?
NL: I'd just like to say that we're trying hard to be in a band that's legitimate. We don't wanna be a band that's going to sell out and sign to a major just because we're gaining interest.
MR: We're in it for the long haul.
NL: We're not a fucking buzz band.
JS: Yeah, don't buy into the fucking hype, man. Grab some friends, write some tunes, hit the road.
MR: Quit your day job. No money, no car, no job, but I'm in a band.

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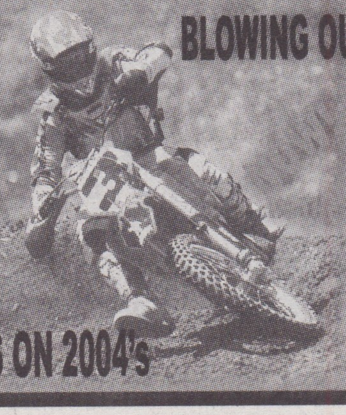

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photo: Sandra E.

audio karate

by
Catheryn 'Cat' Dumas

San Gabriel foursome Audio Karate stormed through Hemet, CA after a whirlwind trip on the Van's Warped Tour and I snatched them away for a few minutes to chat. I met with the band, which consists of Art Barrios on guitar and vocals, Jason Camacho also on guitar, Gabe Camacho on drums (yes, they are cousins), and Justo Gonzales on bass, in their shiny new van with matching equipment trailer. A far cry from the Seattle's old heap they had back in 2002. I couldn't get an exact answer about who paid for the van but they did say that their label, Kung Fu Records, is treating them very well and they plan on staying with them. "We love them" says Art, "they treat us too good." A household name on the Warped tour for the last few years, AK was ecstatic to be a part of the first Japanese Warped tour. "It was great. They (Japanese) are really good to the bands there. We shared a dressing room with Andrew W.K., because of the alphabetical order, and they were really cool too. We had a great time!", says Jason. The Hemet show was just a "one-off" from the Warped Tour to promote their upcoming sophomore album, Lady Melody. Named for its title track, the album is to be released May 18th. Produced by Bill Stevenson of the Descendants, the band is very impressed with the outcome. "They (The Descendants) are one of our greatest musical influences." says Justo. "We are big fans. Bill had his opinions about the (tracks) but also listened to what we had to say. He's done a lot of albums so he knows how to work with people." he added. Together as a band since high school, Audio Karate is now in their 20's and has written this album as young adults rather than teens. "Lady Melody, the song, we compare to women because they drive us crazy both emotionally and sexually." Justo said. "Yeah, it's a sexually motivated album about touring the world" Jason added. While the entire band writes the songs, the lyrics are mainly Art's department. If you know him you know that he is very quiet and reserved. When he gets on stage, however, he talks to the audience like they are close friends. The band is very tight-knit and spends alot of time together. Like family, they had all the same answers to my questions. From sports to video games to music, Audio Karate is very close and deeply intwined with each others lives. I doubt they have much trouble writing songs about it.

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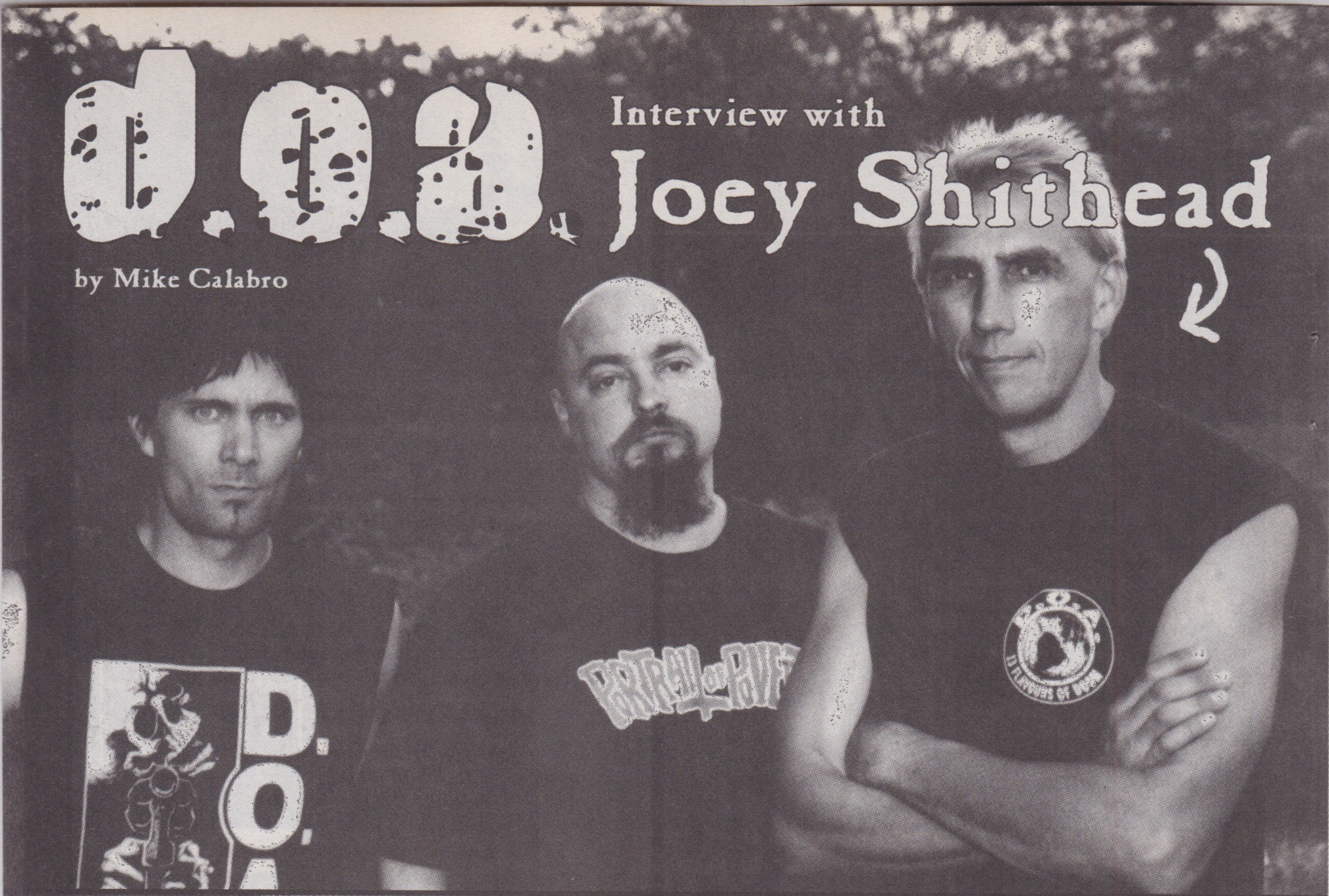
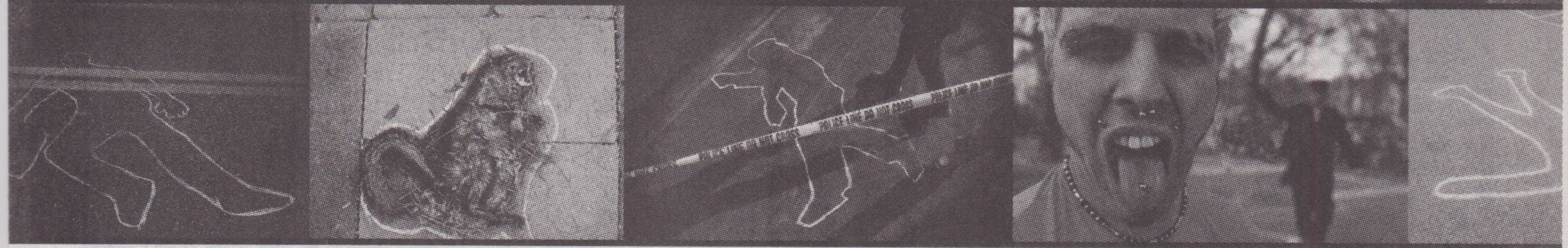
d.o.a. Interview with Joey Shithead

by Mike Calabro





So, you¹re from Canada, eh?
(Laughs) Yea. Yea. We are from Canada.

Does that mean you're a lumberjack?
I have been a lumberjack believe it or not. I know how to use a chainsaw and have cut down lots of trees and stuff like that. I¹ve been a bouncer. I¹ve been a lumberjack, taxi driver, punk rock musician and I currently run a record label. I've run for the Green Party 3 times up here. I've been an actor. I have been a talk show host on the radio. So I've had a checkered career.

What's the dealio with the musical chainsaws?
There are a couple of albums that have chainsaws on them. There are three songs. One's called "Lumberjack City", which is the DOA life story. There is another one called "Cut Time" and there is a third one called "Unchained Melody".

I imagine everyone up in Canada just runs around cutting shit up.
Well, one of the songs is about Canada and being a lumberjack and everything that it entails. The other one is about cutting people up with a chainsaw in revenge. "Cut Time" is about cutting people up in different choice cuts, flank or loin or whatever.

Hopefully I am not invited to dinner at your place.
We take the chainsaw and tune it up to the track. We thought of this long before that band Jackal did. They were some '80's metal band that were using chainsaws. We thought of the idea way before they did.

I think that DOA wear less makeup than they do.
I would hope. (Laughs again) Lumberjacks and real men DON'T NEED MAKEUP.

Can you teach the readers of Modern Fix some Canadian cuss words?
Hey Mike, did you get a copy of "Win the Battle"?

Nope.
Well I am gonna send you one because it has a little short course on how to speak Canadian. I will give you a quick example. Instead of saying something is great; you shorten it and say 'scgrate'. Or instead of it's excellent you say 'sexcellant'. If something is cool it's 'school. Oh, here is a real famous one. When you go like, "yes I understand", you go, "Yeah No". So you just drop the "I" out.

That's pretty school.
Yea, 'scgrate.

I feel gay now. Let's talk about something manly...say, hockey and punk rock.
We have played hockey all of our lives. There were a few albums made

by some of hockey's greats like Phil Esposito. Marcel Dion of the LA Kings made some hockey rock records which were absolutely terrible beyond belief. This was around 1970 or '71. The real national anthem of Canada is "Taking Care of Business" [by BTO]. So we did a cover to that song and made a video of it where we were all wearing lumberjack shirts and playing hockey against a gang of evil businessmen. So after that, everywhere we go, people challenge us to a game. They usually have twelve to fifteen guys ready to beat the crap out of us and we just have three or four. There is always a game going on in Canada. You drop a hockey puck and everyone will join in.

Canadians are well known for drinking. Is Canuck booze better than others?
In the way of beer, my favorite would be Newcastle Brown Ale.

You're not a real Canadian. Aren't you supposed to only drink Canadian swill?
Well ya know. I suppose the best Canadian beer would be (loooong pause with lots of ums and ahhs). Well there are piles of good micros up here.

I prefer a nice cheap Kokanee. I really like looking for the hidden sasquatch on each bottle.
Ah no. Kokanee is terrible. It's just marketed widely, but only sasquatches can drink that beer. One of our bands, The Real McKenzies was sponsored by Kokanee and they went to a Kokanee sponsored convention. A newspaper guy overheard one of the McKenzies say "Ah, we can't drink this fucking piss". So they got kicked off the sponsorship deal and received no more free beer. Other ones to avoid are LaBatt's Blue or Molson Canadian. That shit is ass.

Why do Canadians hate Americans?
It's good to have a little rivalry. Especially if you go up there with a junior hockey team.

Your label only presses Canadian bands. Many of your songs sound Anti-American such as in "Death to Multi-Nationals". Do you hate all Americans or just me?
It's not really American hatred. It's more of a hatred of people like George Bush, Donald Rumsfeld, John Ashcroft and hatred of McDonalds and Starbucks. It's definitely not anti-American it more like anti-Corporate America. There is a big difference. I have tons of friends in the states and have played thousands of shows there. It's always fun at DOA shows. Lots of really cool people show up. Well, not always, but a lot.

Being a rock star you must get tons of diseases like Monkey Pox and West Nile. Each year it seems that more and more diseases are popping up. Is all this coming from Canadian Rock Stars?
(Laughs) One scientist came up with a theory that holds a lot of water. Like with the Chicken Flu or something like that. About 4 years ago that came from Gwon Dong province in southern China.

> I can't tune my guitar while on pot. Have you ever seen a Grateful Dead concert?

SARS also came out of Gwon Dong. What this scientist was saying is that since people have newly attained wealth there, they have been importing a lot of animals from the jungles of Cambodia, Vietnam, Burma and places like that. So all of a sudden all these people are exposed to diseases that they have no natural immunity to. Then it all spreads from there. I think that the theory makes sense. Then if you think about AIDS coming from animals in Africa, it all just seems to make sense.

So the Canadian government did not invent all these trendy new diseases? No conspiracy theories?
I don't think so. I think you can apply conspiracy theories to 911 for sure.

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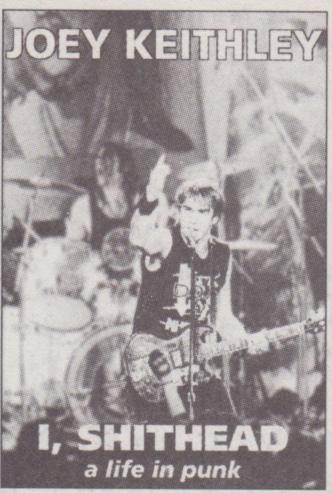
When is your book coming out?
It's out November the first. It's called "I Shithead. A Life in Punk".



Care to give the book some free advertising?
Yea, you can get it through www.suddendeath.com . The publisher is Arsenal Pulp Press. The book is chock full of activist stories and funny stories and stupid stories. It's a good read with about 300 pages. I spent the first half of the year writing it. It details the first 13 years of DOA and gives a summary of about the last 10. It just got too long and we were running out of time. It was 50% longer than it should have been so we had to chop it down a bit. It's pretty detailed and has lots of interesting stuff in it.

Do your kid's friends call you Mr. Shithead or does Joey suffice?
Everybody calls me "Mr." up here. Mr. Shithead or Mr. Keithley. It doesn't matter. If they don't, they don't get far.

What is the difference between political punk and hippy music?
It all depends on what kind of hippies you are talking about. Some hippies can be very aimless and get nothing done. The original '60's hippies were some pretty serious people who ended up doing some good stuff. They did a lot of stuff to stop the Vietnam War. They changed people's attitudes and made North America and western Europe a bit more understanding places to live in than it was in the '50's and early '60's. To be a hippy now really doesn't bother me. People can be whatever they want. The ultimate crisscross here is when in the early '90's brought the Crusty Movement. It was real popular in Europe, especially in England. You had punks that were kinda like hippies in certain regards.

Kinda like current day trustafarians that dwell in areas like Boulder and Santa Cruz?
Yea, you got it. They don't bathe a lot and have dreadlocks. Instead of having peace signs, they have Crass symbols sewn to their jackets. They have some dogs and stuff like that. The Crusty movement is not as big as it used to be. The movement is the ultimate joining of punks and hippies. Whether that is good or not is up to the individual to decide. I don't mind them myself.

SOCIAL CHAOS

How many times have you been in jail for your political beliefs?
I only been arrested once. Basically, the cops came down and snagged us at a club in Vancouver called the Smiling Buddha, which is the first punk rock club in Vancouver. They busted the place up for political reasons. They didn't like us. So I spent one night in the tank.

That is a really weak story. Was there any death, destruction or animal rapes involved?
All right. So, we were watching the Subhumans. Not the English ones, but the Canadian ones. Nine or ten cops came in and tapped me on the shoulder and said "You're coming with me". I responded "What for?". They told me I was drunk and disorderly. Now, I only had two beers. I've been drunk and disorderly enough times to know that this time I wasn't. I stood up and knocked over two cops so they immediately put me in a choke-hold and kicked me in the nuts. After passing out from the chokehold I woke up in the back of the police van with about 15 other guys. They took us in and threw us all in the holding tank. We started raising a ruckus and the cops came in and grabbed one of my buddies and beat the crap out of him. A bunch of our friends came down and sat in the waiting room at the police station and tried to do a "free the punks" type of thing. That's a bit of a more complete version of the story. If you want to read this story and others in detail, then buy my book. It will be knocking Michael Moore off the New York Times best seller list.

You have any weed on ya?
The other day the Supreme Court of Canada said that the possession of pot is not illegal in Canada although the police say they will still arrest you. In Vancouver they generally don't arrest you if you have a small amount. They just take it away from you. You can have pot but it is illegal to sell it. British Columbia (BC) is the most lax province. You can probably get away with being caught with an ounce in your pocket. The rest of Canada is more redneck about it. BC is the pot Mecca of North America. We are not as liberal as Amsterdam. Personally I don't smoke pot. Do you know why?

Because you are scared?
No. I can't tune my guitar while on pot. Have you ever seen a Grateful Dead concert?

Umm, fuck no.
I saw them once when I was much younger and they spent half the time tuning. So I decided that when you smoke pot you can¹t tune your guitar. This was before everybody had electronic tuners.

I thought all musicians are supposed to have problems with drugs. Do you have any problems?
There was never a problem really. The hard drugs are not recommended for anybody. I lost too many friends from heroin and stuff like that. I think it's the biggest waste of time. Hard drugs are not a healthy thing. Steer clear kids. My best friend and drummer in DOA died from heroin. He was not a junkie. He just had a hit that was too strong, too pure. Knocked him right off.

Your new record sucks. It doesn't sound like any of the "cool" bubblegum punk that is on MTV today. How the hell you gonna sell your record if you ain't on MTV? I suggest you guys get some backup dancers and shit.
(long pause) Ahh, that would be one solution. I don't think that's the one for DOA. I don't give a fuck if it doesn't sound like anything. We just write songs and come up with what we want to play. If people like it or don't, that's their choice. We didn't think the record should sound like melodic pop punk. It's just not our style.

Have you heard from Jello (Biafra) lately?
I talk to him every few months to see how he is doing. He is not very happy these days, considering what is going on with the lawsuits with the ex-members. DOA has been on about 10 different record labels and Alternative Tentacles (Jello's label) has been the fairest of them all. They paid us on time. They were completely honest. I have nothing but good things to say about Jello. He is a good guy and has done a lot for people. But, I gotta go.

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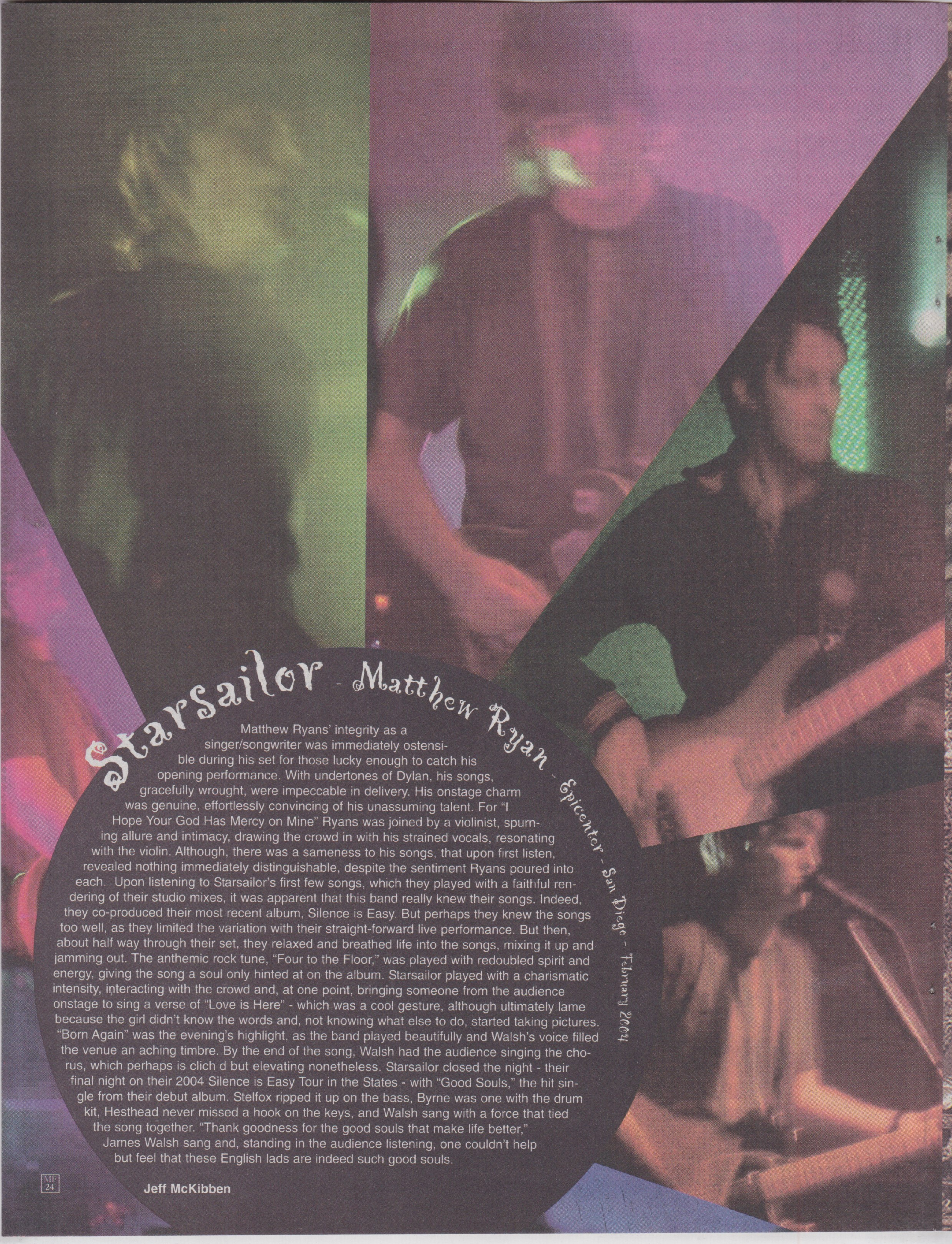

Starsailor - Matthew Ryan - Epicenter - San Diego - February 2004

Matthew Ryans' integrity as a singer/songwriter was immediately ostensible during his set for those lucky enough to catch his opening performance. With undertones of Dylan, his songs, gracefully wrought, were impeccable in delivery. His onstage charm was genuine, effortlessly convincing of his unassuming talent. For "I Hope Your God Has Mercy on Mine" Ryans was joined by a violinist, spurning allure and intimacy, drawing the crowd in with his strained vocals, resonating with the violin. Although, there was a sameness to his songs, that upon first listen, revealed nothing immediately distinguishable, despite the sentiment Ryans poured into each. Upon listening to Starsailor's first few songs, which they played with a faithful rendering of their studio mixes, it was apparent that this band really knew their songs. Indeed, they co-produced their most recent album, Silence is Easy. But perhaps they knew the songs too well, as they limited the variation with their straight-forward live performance. But then, about half way through their set, they relaxed and breathed life into the songs, mixing it up and jamming out. The anthemic rock tune, "Four to the Floor," was played with redoubled spirit and energy, giving the song a soul only hinted at on the album. Starsailor played with a charismatic intensity, interacting with the crowd and, at one point, bringing someone from the audience onstage to sing a verse of "Love is Here" - which was a cool gesture, although ultimately lame because the girl didn't know the words and, not knowing what else to do, started taking pictures. "Born Again" was the evening's highlight, as the band played beautifully and Walsh's voice filled the venue an aching timbre. By the end of the song, Walsh had the audience singing the chorus, which perhaps is cliché but elevating nonetheless. Starsailor closed the night - their final night on their 2004 Silence is Easy Tour in the States - with "Good Souls," the hit single from their debut album. Stelfox ripped it up on the bass, Byrne was one with the drum kit, Hesthead never missed a hook on the keys, and Walsh sang with a force that tied the song together. "Thank goodness for the good souls that make life better," James Walsh sang and, standing in the audience listening, one couldn't help but feel that these English lads are indeed such good souls.

Jeff McKibben

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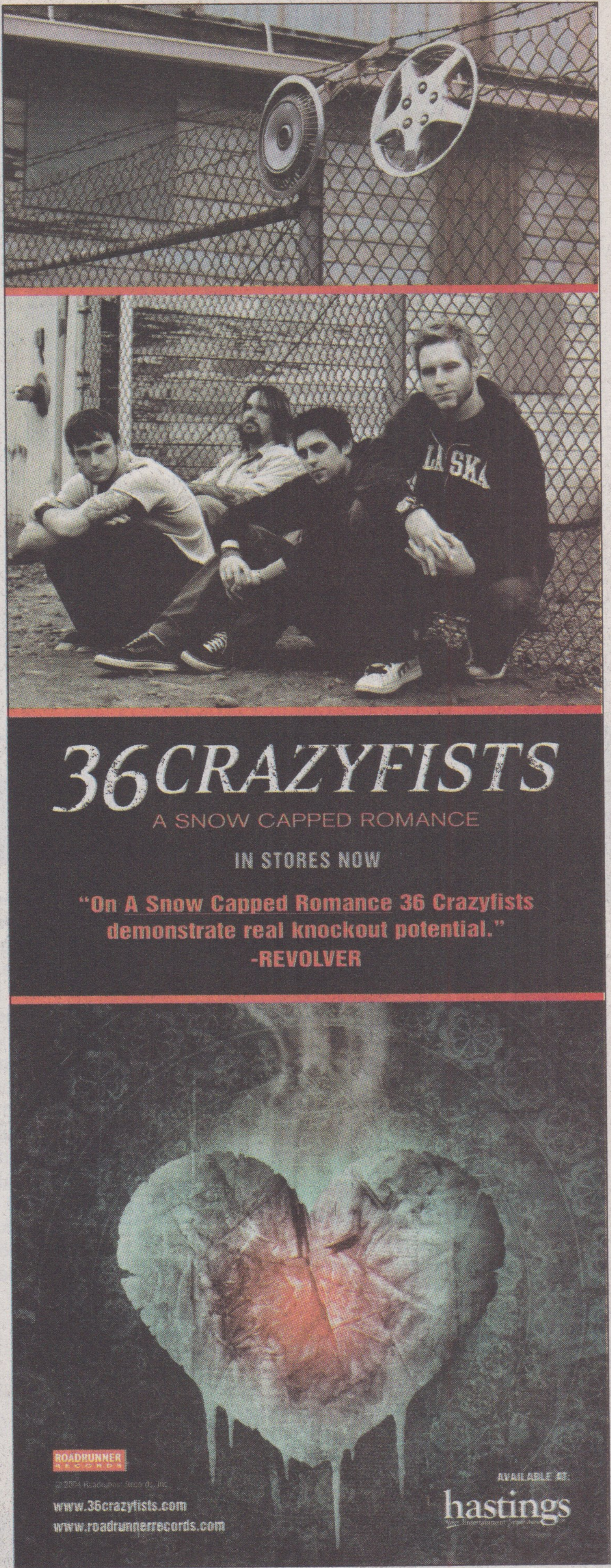

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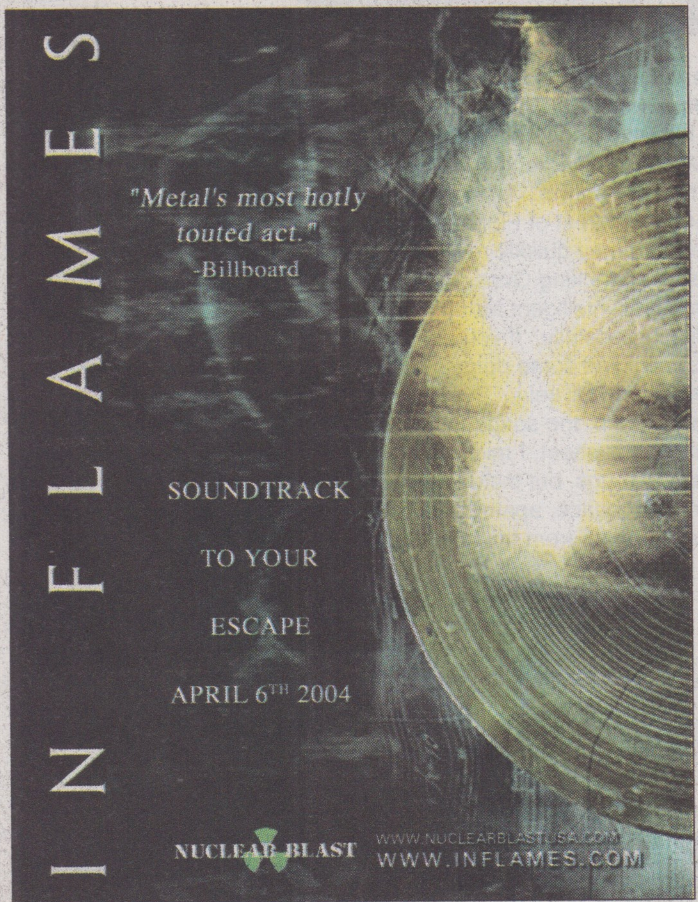

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orange island

by Brian Greenaway

What's your favorite thing in the whole world?

Mine is being surprised. I love the phone call from the girl that I thought would never call back (most don't), I love the three run homer in the ninth when you're down 7-5, I love the "holy shit" in life. I love the opening band that makes you drop your beer because they're rocking harder, faster, and with more intensity than the headliners could ever muster. I love Orange Island. I love the immediacy within each track, percolating beneath the angular riffs and the driving beats. I love the energy and raw emotion in tracks like, "My Last Move" and "Knife in Hand, Gun in Mouth" - you can't get away from it, even if you wanted to.

I love Dave Gorman's warm, thick voice and I love his lyrics: confessional, boasting and sick of himself at the same time. Aren't we all like that? Shouldn't it be harder to look into the mirror that it is? We justify our anger, our lust, our whole being until we don't have to justify it anymore. Orange Island is from Massachusetts but they could easily be from anywhere. Their stories, like their music, incorporates the bits of the world that seem relevant to them-a chord progression from Hot Water Music, a flair for the dramatic like Elliot, Blake Schwarzenbach's introspection. The result is one that truly surprises, like the ten bucks you found in your jeans or the letter from your grandma two months after your birthday. Orange Island's story isn't a long one (yet) if measured in years, yet the steep learning curve puts them squarely in the company of the established acts they've been sharing stages with throughout this great country of ours. They're not at the top of many playbills (yet), and youwon't hear the undeniably rocking strains of "Oh How Clintonian of Me" on your local college radio station (yet), but be warned-the elementof surprise counts for a lot and while it might be antithetical to say, "prepare to be surprised" - there's too much going on here to deny. I love Orange Island.

www.orangeisland.net

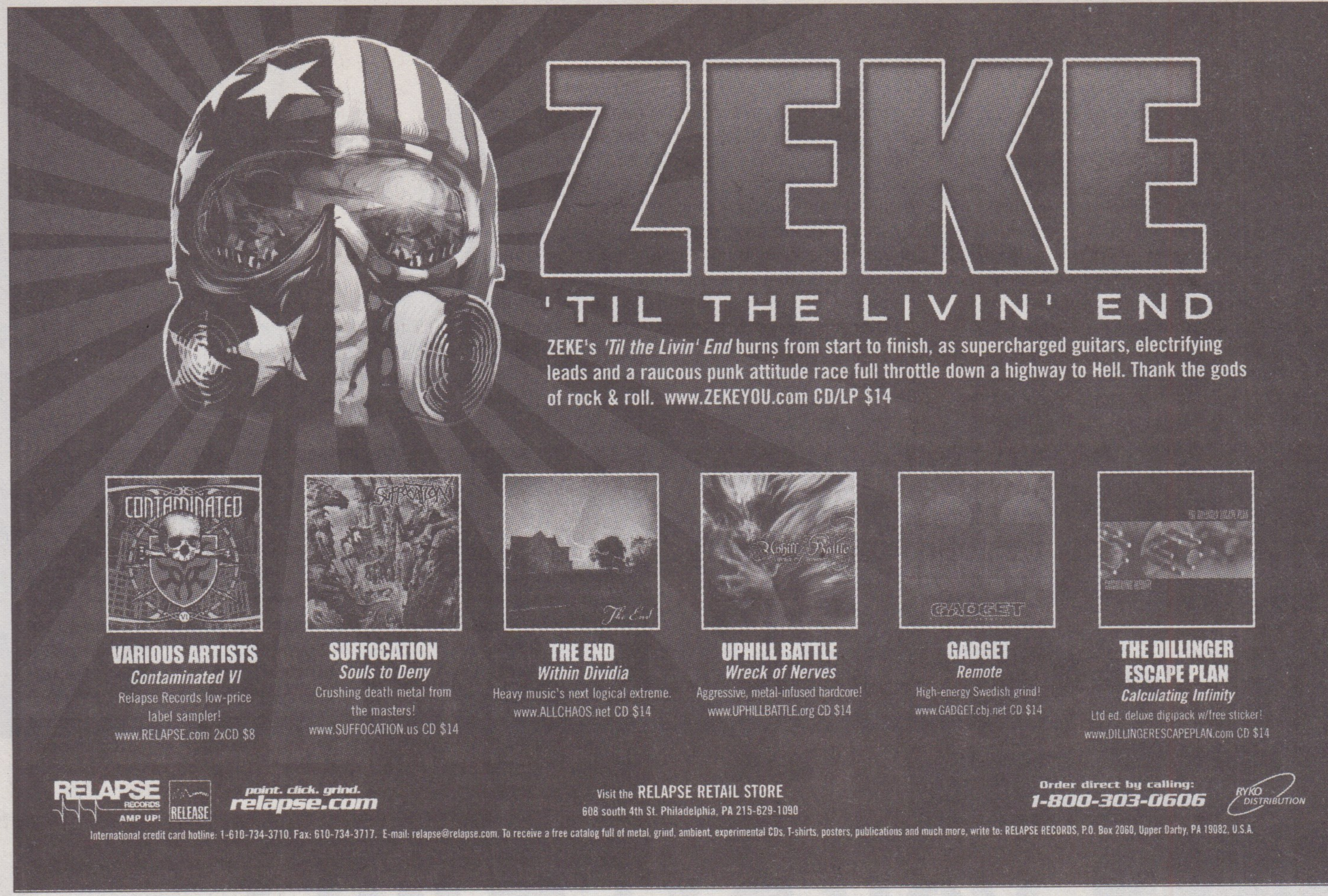
2003 "Self-Titled (Triple Crown)
2002 "Everything You Thought You Knew (Iodine)
2001 "The Shape of Calling" (Iodine)

THE A.K.A.'S (are everywhere)

by Stacy Brandt

I like rock 'n' roll that induces ass shaking. Whether this is intrinsically a strength or a weakness, I'm not quite sure; it's just a fact of life. Booty shaking tunes, for a sad while last decade, seemed to be facing eternity in limbo, but a decent handful of great albums have been made recently in this joyous vein. "White Doves and Smoking Guns" is one of these groovin' throwbacks to the future of combining ass kicking with ass shaking. The A.K.A.s rock in a early '70s Rolling Stones way, and that's a good thing in my book. Sure there are a lot of bands out there right now ripping off the Stones, but The A.K.A.s carve their own refreshingly moderning sound niche instead of just revamping the past. The tunes are catchy and pop-savvy, but the album is the antithesis of typical pop dreck. Former Brothers Keeper vocalist Mike Ski formed the band to rival the band he'd always heard in his head, according to the band's bio. He snatched up Lukas Previs (guitar), Chad Bowser (bass), Bob Williams (drums) and Nina Aron (farfisa) to complete his vision. The New-York-City-based band put out their first EP, "The A.K.A.s Are Everywhere," themselves and got mouths to movin' with their live shows. Their performance at Austin's SXSW festival piqued the interest of Florida-based independent label Fueled by Ramen and they quickly recorded their debut long player, "White Doves and Smoking Guns," with producer Tim O'Heir. The lyrics are uncommonly intelligent for an album that manages to rock and boogie this successfully. If you actually take the time to read the lyrics sheet, you'll find some poignant, thought-provoking themes in a decidedly political vein. The heavy themes never take away from the joyous sound of the songs themselves, though. If I didn't bother to read the lyrics sheet, I might think they were actually singing about chicks and drugs, but instead the sing-along choruses are about revolution, war, peace, apathy and more revolution. Don't worry though, it doesn't detract from the ass-shaking one bit.

2003 "White Doves and Smoking Guns" (Fueled by Ramen)
2001 "The A.K.A.s Are Everywhere" (self-released)



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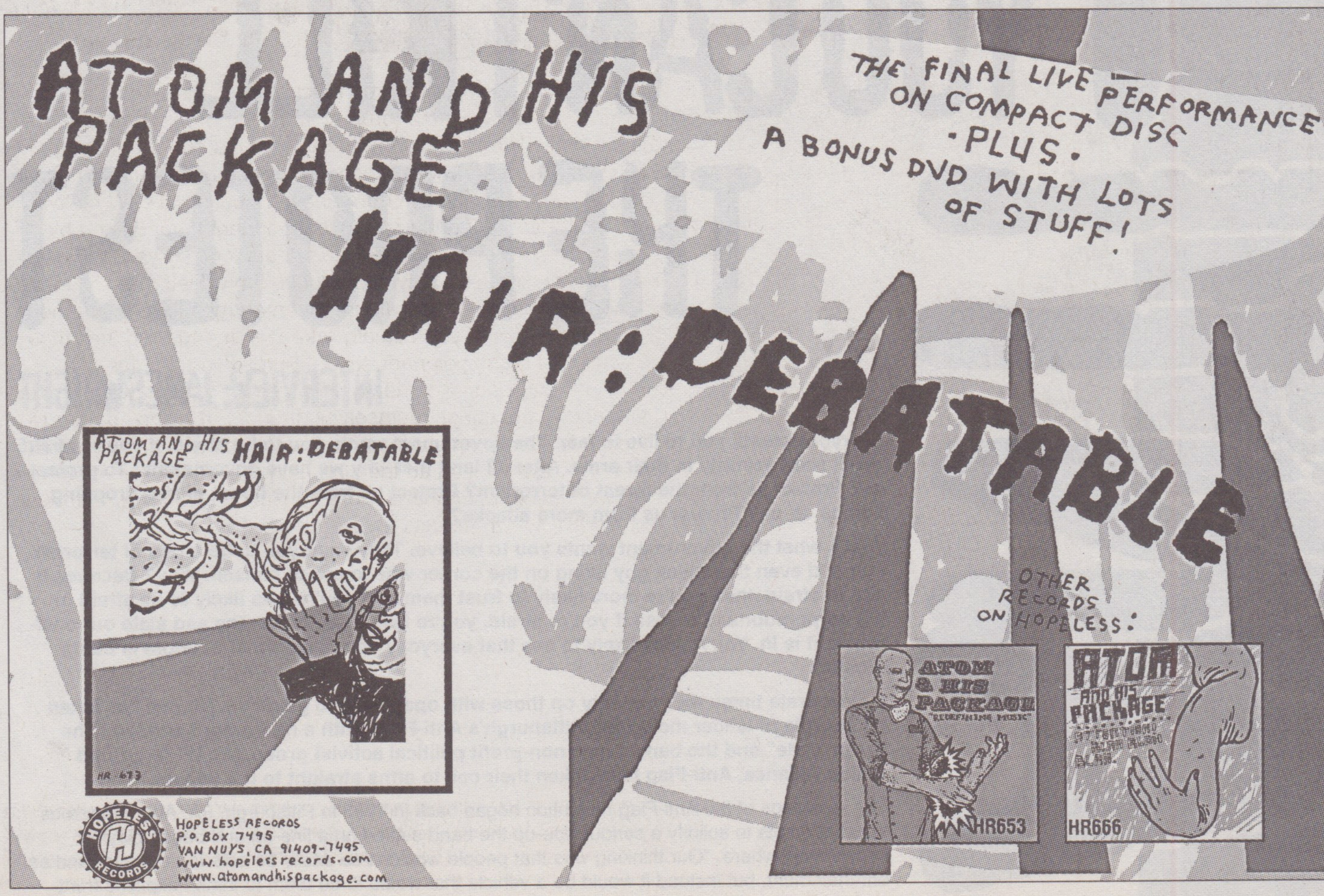

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ANTI-FLAG

YOU CAN'T KILL THE PROTEST

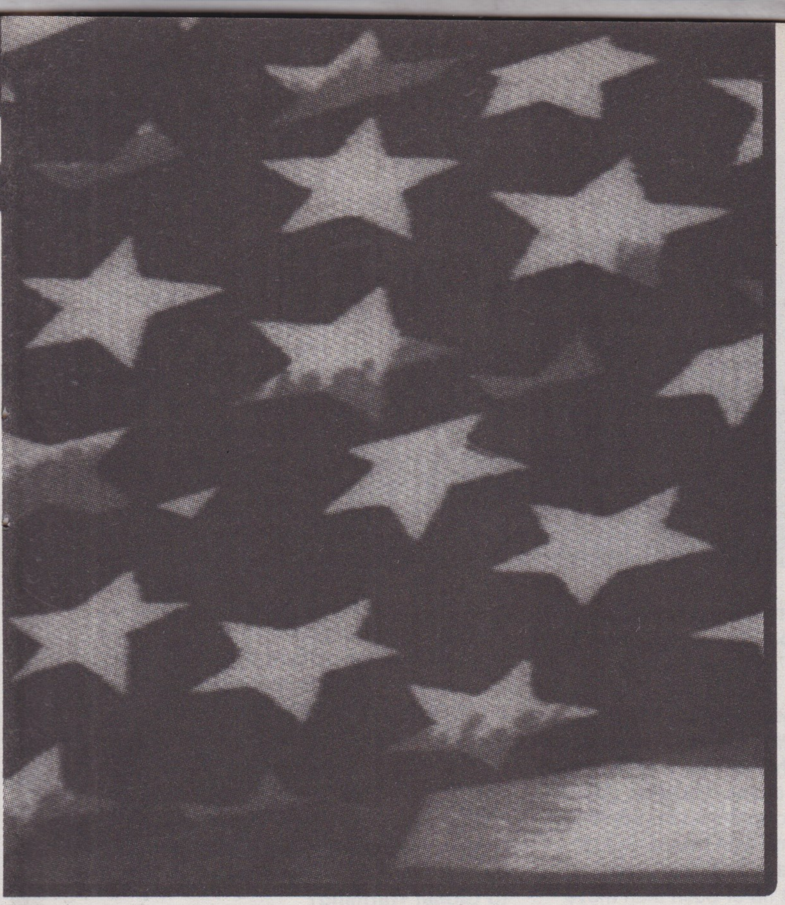
INTERVIEW: JAMES WRIGHT

Everyone wants you to live in fear. The government wants you to be afraid. If you're afraid you'll seek security in their arms. After all isn't that why we have government? To protect us? Protect us from the threat of terrorism? Protect us from the threat of Iraq dropping bombs on us? Protect us from more attacks?

That's what the government wants you to believe. They want you to be afraid of terrorists, Iraq and even that black guy living on the corner who keeps to himself. Why? Because if you're afraid, then you're more likely to trust them and you're less likely to be afraid of big corporations. Because if you're afraid, you're less likely to see the sad state our environment is in. You're less likely to see that everyday you're personal freedom is being eroded.

In desperate times we must rely on those with open eyes to guide us. No one has taken on the role of leader more than Pittsburgh's Anti-Flag. With a new record entitled "The Terror State" and the band's own non-profit political activist group, the Underground Action Alliance, Anti-Flag have taken their call to arms straight to the people.

The rumblings of the Anti-Flag revolution began back in 1988 in Pittsburgh, PA. After numerous failed attempts to solidify a serious line-up the band settled on a line-up and began playing shows everywhere. "Our thinking was that people wouldn't so easily be able to treat our band as entertainment, but instead it would be a vehicle that would force them to think," explains front-



man Justin Sane.

After releasing numerous records independently the band created their own label, A-F Records, as a vehicle to deliver their politically charged messages. Shortly thereafter the band was asked by Fat Mike (NOFX) to release their latest offering on Fat Wreck Chords. Now the band is poised and ready to move in for the kill.

With a US election on the way in November, I had the chance to ask Anti-Flag's Justin Sane about the importance of being informed when your government is lying to you.

Why is this the "Terror State"?
Justin Sane: The idea of naming the record that was to be ambiguous and encourage people to think about what is terror? Is it the Osama Bin Laden? Is it the United States? Is it George Bush? What is a terrorist? That's what we want people to think about. Is a terrorist any group or organization that creates terror in someone's life or is it a particular country? We hope to encourage people to think about these things and let people come to their own conclusions.

Are you hoping that there is a conscious revolution in America?
That's exactly it. We're trying to generate a dialogue and encourage people to think beyond what's right in front of them.

Do you think Americans have become complacent?
It's interesting because I think most people in North America who are of middle class have become complacent in a lot of ways. I just went to a copy shop over here and asked the guy there, "What's exciting about Canadian politics right now?" and his reply was, "I just found out who our Prime Minister was about 2-weeks ago. I don't know anything about politics and I don't care." I just thought it was funny but also really tragic. It's become that way for a lot of Americans as well. They think if it doesn't affect them directly, they don't need to care. Unfortunately, when trade agreements such as NAFTA are passed, they might not affect you at that moment but 10 years down the road as jobs disappear from your area, it does affect you. The sad part about it is, by then, it's too late. I think there is a certain degree of complacency but I think it's less now that 9/11 happened. Unfortunately it took something that horrific to wake people up and make them ask questions about what their government is doing in foreign countries. What foreign policies is our country passing in other countries that make people want to fly planes into our buildings? I think before this war, you saw the biggest anti-war movement in the US since Vietnam because people realized that our government has been going around imposing our views on other people. So in a way, I think there's a lot less complacency then there was before 9/11 but there's still a lot of people that need to be woken up.

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ANTI-FLAG

Why do you think some Americans sit there and don't respond when things like the Patriot Act take place?
I think it's passed like every other bill the Bush administration has passed before it; it's passed with fear. Scare the people enough that they're willing to give up personal freedoms, so they feel safe. Unfortunately, there's no way any government or military is going to be able to protect the people 100%. If terrorism is going to happen then there's nothing we can do to stop it. Giving up personal liberties is not going to change that. Backing something like the Patriot Act, where you're giving up personal freedoms, is very dangerous. To quote Benjamin Franklin, "He who gives up liberty for protection, deserves neither protection nor liberty." I think he's right; it's just a foolish thing to do. I think there is a lot of opposition to the Patriot Act and progressives realize that this is regressive. There are over 150 cities in the US, that have voted not to uphold the Patriot act and there's more on the way. So in other words, people are awake and they realize that this is dangerous.

With lower wages, higher costs of living and no universal health care system, it seems as though cards are horribly stacked against blue-collar working class citizens in America. What can these people do when it seems like they might be doomed from the start?
Well I can see that but it's still very wrong. It doesn't take a lot to influence policy and working around Pittsburgh area at a grassroots level with groups that are against the Patriot Act, there have been people that have been going to council meetings influencing policy to vote against the act. It doesn't take a lot. When people decide that they are going to make a change it can be very empowering. That's what we're trying to encourage as a band because it doesn't take that many people to do. So few people are voting right now that if the people who vote started writing letters and go to demonstrations the politicians would listen because not many people vote!

One of the things about the recent Canadian Provincial recent election was that people voted the liberals into power. Not because they wanted a liberal government but because they disliked the conservatives who were in power.
That's the attitude of progressives in the US right now. After four years of Bush in power, they're ready for anything other than Bush and they're so scared of him being re-elected. If he gets re-elected then Bush has a clean slate to do whatever he wants. I think voting for the democrats right now is a must. I don't think that is the right answer but you have to take little steps. First we get rid of Bush then move on from there.

The gap between the rich and the poor is quite large in America. Do you think that they will ever close the gaps in social classes in the United States?
I think we have to look between borders and look at class. It's interesting because we just had the Martin Luther King holiday and one of the things that he recognized, that a lot of other civil rights atavists don't, is you have to go beyond skin color and into class. When Martin Luther King was assassinated he was marching with striking garbage workers and at that point it wasn't about black or white; he was marching with workers. I think people in America need to drop these blinders of nationalism and start recognizing that trade agreements such as NAFTA hurt us all. There are provisions in NAFTA that erode local government. I think what workers need to realize is that if they want to make progress for one country, then you have to make progress for all countries. I encourage people to look for organizations that are dealing with these issues and are working to rid their country of NAFTA or improve it. We can't improve things in the US if we don' improve things in Mexico. If there is no environmental protection or worker protection in Mexico then Canadian and American companies can move business there and exploit those workers. That also means that jobs here disappear when that happens and workers are being exploited. It also means that there is no money here for social services like health care and you no longer have those things. I think we have to look beyond borders and realize that it's an issue of the super rich versus everyone else.

Do you think Michael Moore is helping to open people's eyes to what's really going on with Corporate America?
I hope so. We need a thousand more people like Michael Moore! If he enlightens one person then that's a step in the right direction. Unfortunately, one man is not enough by himself and other people have to pick up the ball as well.

Is that what you're trying to accomplish in Anti-Flag?
Of coarse. I think the main thing we're focusing on right now is this upcoming election and then after that we'll probably focus on NAFTA. Because Canada and the US are such strong economic forces in the world, it's up to people in those countries to work together along with our brothers and sisters in South America to show that NAFTA only protects super huge corporations. There are no social protections, no labor protections and no environmental protections and if we're going to try and raise up the rest of the world, we need to first try and raise up ourselves.

Do you think people are ignorant to the environmental crisis we're in with regards to Global Warming?
For sure. What's funny is we have some of the world's greatest scientists acknowledging that there is global warming but we still have people saying, "It doesn't affect me so I don't care." I hope there's enough humanity left in us as human beings that people will start to care about these kinds of things. These things may not affect you right now but they certainly may affect your children or the people you care about. I do think that we all come from the earth, we all eat food that's harvested from the earth, drink the earth's water and when you destroy or harm Mother Earth, it's only going to catch up with you.

Why do you think it's important for people reading this to get out and vote this coming November?
It all comes back to the basic issue here and that's that people don't think it directly affects them, but it does. Secondly, I think it's the responsibility of the people to use their right to vote to make a difference. We should want to make a difference for people in the world because someday you might find yourself in a dire situation where you're living in poverty. When that day comes and the tables are reversed you will find yourself at the mercy of someone like yourself; someone that just doesn't care. Those are the types of things I try to remind myself of everyday. Also, it's such a simple thing to do; registering to vote is easy. But in the end I'm not even going to tell people how to use their vote just as long as they vote for the person they think will have a positive impact for this country. I wouldn't vote for Bush because I honestly don't think he cares about anyone except huge corporations, but if someone disagrees with me at least they care enough to be involved. I'd rather see that than nothing.

I think it's amazing that Bush is in bed with everyone from the executives at

Enron to Osama Bin Laden, yet the American people have yet to revolt against him!

Well one of the reasons we do what we do is because the media in America isn't reporting these things. You have to understand who controls the media in America and that it's all controlled by big business. Colin Powell's son is a big executive at CNN, so of coarse CNN isn't going to be overly critical of the Bush administration. It's not that there's a conspiracy or anything to the point where they get all the reporters in one room and say, "Ok, we're not going to report anything bad about the Bush administration." The thing is they hire people that think like them and have the correct ideology, so they'll report things the way the want them reported. I think the mass media in the US doesn't really reflect what's going on in the world today. We traveled overseas and it's interesting to see what made the news over there because their coverage of the war was very, very different. Reading their news you started to see things that never made the news here. One of the former United Nations weapons inspectors has given a report to British parliament about whether or not there were lies perpetrated by the Blair/Bush administrations. What came out was that both Bush and Blair had blatantly lied about the threat of Iraq and they used that to invade. That news is all over the front pages of the British news but here there's nothing about it. I don't think people here in the US are stupid or don't care but they can only make judgments on what they receive and that's a huge problem that we try to address in Anti-Flag. We want to show people that there is a different side to things. Yes you might have to do a little work to see that, whether it's reading a British newspaper online or www.democracynow.org [Justin's personal favorite]. Those are the types of things that inspire Anti-Flag to do what we do and make me believe that we can make a difference. I try to encourage people to do something and take part in the process of democracy. Whether that's just simply going out and voting or telling somebody why George Bush is horrible, either way it doesn't take a lot to make a difference.

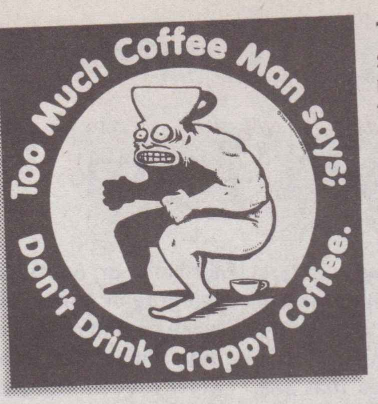
I was watching CNN the other day and they said the Democrats held 34% of the vote while Bush had 56%. Do you think the margin between the two candidates is really that large?

Honestly, I couldn't tell you. Right now there's such a long time from now until the election that it's really hard to tell. I think we do need to do as much as we can to encourage people to vote against Bush. Right now, Bush stands a great chance of getting re-elected, and we need to change that. In my eyes, George Bush is a war criminal. He lied to us about the threat of Iraq, he lied about weapons of mass destruction and he took CIA information and distorted it while silencing those that in the CIA that didn't go along with him. George Bush has never owned up to the fact that there were no weapons of mass destruction. The only thing they ever said was, "We thought there were weapons of mass destruction; Sorry. But hey, at least we got Saddam Hussein because he was a terrible person." There have been 500 American soldiers killed in Iraq and if I heard that and I was a mother, brother, sister or brother of one of those soldiers, I'd be very angry. Why is George Bush not taking responsibility for his mistake? He's the leader of our country and should be held responsible. Congress should be holding meetings to impeach Bush right now but unfortunately they're in bed with Bush. They supported him going into this war and they hold the same corporate interests as him, so they'd never do that.

Did you start the Underground Action Alliance to bring these issues to a head?

Well the idea behind that was just to provide people with information on how to be an activist. We meet a lot of young people and we get a lot of them that say, "How do I get involved?" So we set up this website [www.undergroundactionalliance.org] to let them know how to get involved. A lot of people find that it's pretty easy to get involved and that it can actually be a lot of fun. When you go to a protest march with all your friends, you get to make a lot of noise and play drums; it can be party. It can be a great time and at the same time you're bringing attention to an issue that people might not necessarily wanna look at and hopefully they get the facts about something they didn't know about. All these things are really important and can be really exciting.

Get involved now! Take action! Start by visiting:
www.anti-flag.com
www.undergroundactionalliance.org
www.axisofjustice.org
www.democracynow.org



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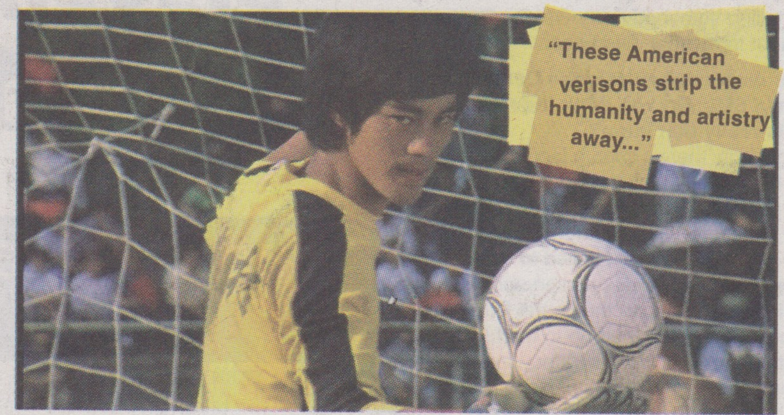
Miramax: Butchers Of An Art form

by Ryan Thomas

Seattle book store employee, Mark Pollard, owns an Asian Film fansite called Kungfucinema.com, where he sells shirts, writes reviews, and provides links to other Asian film sites that sell Asian films. A few weeks ago he found a Cease and Desist letter in his mail from Miramax, demanding he stop selling Asian films or face the consequences. See, Miramax bought the American distro rights to a whole bunch of Asian films, like Hero and Shaolin Soccer. But fearing American's lack of faith in all things foreign, they re-edited them, added pathetic American voiceovers, and replaced the soundtracks with American songs. In essence, they stripped these Asian films of their culture. When Canadian audiences responded poorly to these chopped up versions, Miramax decided to shelve all the films. These films have come and gone overseas, are already on DVD there. But in America all original DVD copies have been pulled off retailers' shelves, and now sit, edited, in Miramax's vault.

Okay, back to Pollard. Fan sites like Pollard's, and other sites Hellninjacommando.net, Cityonfire.com, HKFilm.net, offer links to sites where people can still buy the originals on DVD--or could anyway, if Miramax wasn't blocking them. In Pollard's case, all he did was provide a link to HKFlix.com, which he was forced to take down through threat of lawsuit. (HKFlix.com was also forced to stop selling these original DVD copies). Reflect on that a second--they were going to sue him over a LINK! The stupid thing is that Miramax bought an entire genre of film in hopes of garnering American dollars, and then alienated the fanbase they need to support the endeavor. As a result, fans sought out alternative ways to get copies. Shaolin Soccer became one of the 10 most illegally downloaded films on the web in 2003 (according to BayTSP, which tracks person-to-person downloads). The Asian Fan Site community also began a Web Alliance, wherein it continually sends letters from fans to Miramax asking for the release of these films, in their original form, either theatrically or on DVD. Further, they plead the integrity of Asian Film, and implore Miramax to wake up and realize American's will tolerate foreign films. (Just look at the moolah Crouching Tiger/Hidden Dragon made.) The site boasts over 12,000 names on its petition so far. For now though, the battle continues, and with money behind them, Miramax remains unperturbed. The films, some of the greatest Asian films ever, sit under lock and key, unwatched.

Stephan owns Hellninjacommando.net.
He's also the person who started the Web Alliance, which, since its inception, has now received national recognition on various news websites.



"These American verisons strip the humanity and artistry away..."

Hey, thanks for doing this. This whole thing blows my mind. What was your reaction when you heard what Miramax did to Mark Pollard ?
It's yet another example of Miramax throwing their weight around in order to get their way. While I'm no legal expert, I have trouble believing they have any case against Pollard. If company X advertises on a major TV network, is the network responsible if company X gets in legal trouble? How is this any different? Unfortunately, Miramax has large sums of money and top lawyers.

Did you get warnings from Miramax as well? Have other sites in your community received warnings?
So far, I have not received any warnings from Miramax, nor have I heard reports from others on this. I'm not entirely sure why Miramax might single out kungfucinema.com, unless it's just to make an example of them.

Have all of the alliance letters been sent off yet?
The letters on the alliance site come from various supporters - most of which have been sent to Miramax, as far as I know. I know that many supporters have sent letters on their own and I actually wish I had a better idea of the volume they've seen. We've also had a lot of support on a couple call-ins we've had.

Has anyone tried to contact Miramax? Has Miramax responded?
Miramax has responded, though quite vaguely, in articles about the alliance on sites such as MSNBC. But we've never received any direct contact from an official Miramax representative. It's actually one of my goals in the near future to see if I can get a direct contact within Miramax. There's still a lot to clear up regarding their rights to the films they own, the exact reasons behind their omission of original soundtracks, how they view asian film fans as consumers. In particular, I'd like to clear up issues around rumors that state they do not own the rights to the soundtrack portions of some films - whether this is true and, if so, why they would not have these rights. One question I'd like to ask is, What makes your assessment of the value of preserving these films so different from other U.S. studios who do preserve these films uncut in their original language?

I noticed you can still buy these films, such as Shaolin Soccer, on Ebay. What's up with that? Is Miramax gonna sue Ebay?
That's beyond my legal knowledge. I'm not sure if a personal auction is exempt from the rules that keep retailers from selling these titles. EBay has long been known for being filled with illegal bootlegs - so I'm not sure legality would keep these off of EBay anyway. You can buy these from non-U.S. based retailers, which is what many asian film fans have turned to. It's unfortunate, though, that these great films are being limited to a small number of people "in the know" and not available to the many would-be fans who know nothing other than Miramax's versions.

So exactly how can people get the originals if they're not on Ebay. Any sneaky ways of getting by Miramax's lawyers here? Online avenues? Commercial dealers? Maybe fly to Hong Kong? How hard has the corperate heads at Miramax made it to get original copies?

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Miramax editorial continued...

Again, the last legal venue for a person in the U.S. to get these films is through a foreign retailer. Our big fear is that Miramax may try and "encourage" rights-holders of these films to enforce region codes in other nations more strongly. If that were to happen, you'd need to buy a region-free DVD player – something that Hollywood would like to make as difficult as possible.

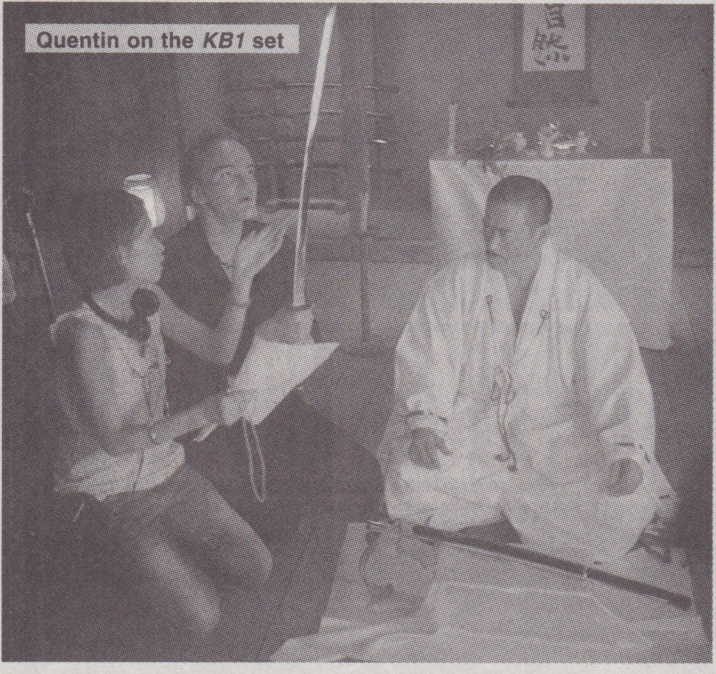
At this point, if they released these films in theaters, would you still go?
Well, they released a few. Legend of the Drunken Master--originally Drunken Master II--was released theatrically, and I didn't attend. I would have if it had been subtitled and uncut. I did see Iron Monkey, having heard it was in its original Cantonese. That was a step in the right direction, but it had cuts and story changes in the subtitles. I'm more than happy to put down my $8 hard-earned dollars to see these films presented in original form.

The big deal here is that viewers can't get the original versions of the films—at least not in a normal retail situation. The Weinsteins are buying them up and locking them away. I know this is a broad question, but what does this mean for the future of Asian films in America?

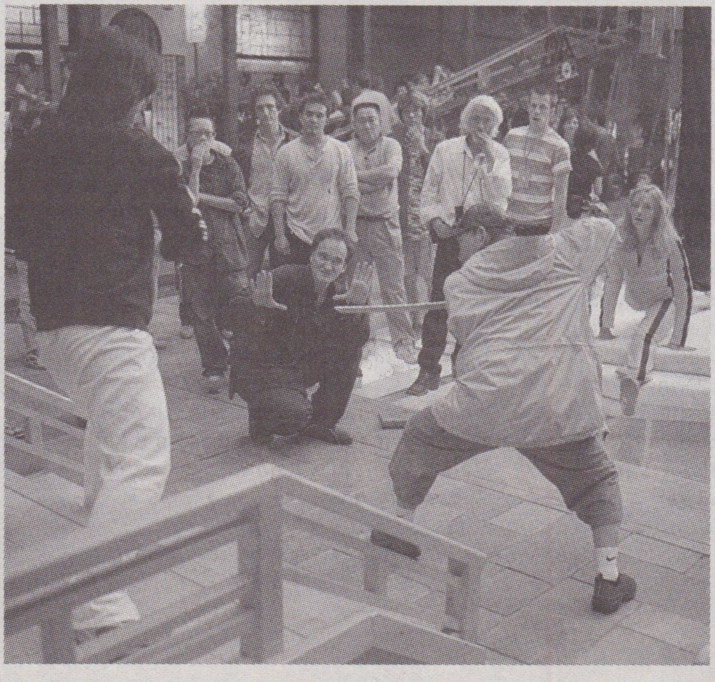
I think it will prevent a lot of American's from taking Asian films seriously. They'll continue to view these as inferior works that are, at best, to be watched for a goof. These American verisons strip the humanity and artistry away, leaving them nothing more than hollow "chop-socky flicks". The poor quality of the miramax's dubbing doesn't help the situation. Just listening to the dubs makes a person believe that Miramax didn't even try to make the film look good. Seeing these versus the real versions is like night and day. I've personally seen peoples' eyes widen when they see a film in its original format. It's like a revelation. As with all films from around the world, Asian films say something about the culture they come from. To edit one of these films is to put a filter on that culture, prevent understanding and appreciation of it. This is one of the biggest side-effects of Miramax's treatment of these films. It hinders cross-cultural understanding. You watch a foreign film to indulge in that culture and what it has to show. Miramax obviously disagrees.

So Miramax thinks we're too dumb to understand it?
It's a question I'd love to ask Mr. Weinstein in person. I think it's possibly a lack of appreciation for the films and the culture that produces them on the part of these people in the first place. If they appreciated it, they wouldn't feel the need to censor it for Americans. There's also the lowest common denominator aspect - the belief that these films should be tailored to the least open-minded of viewers. These are the

Sequence from *Kill Bill 1*



Quentin on the *KB1* set



same folks that tried to tell Peter Jackson that Lord of the Rings should be made into one film. I think we all saw the results of that--Miramax seriously underestimates the intelligence of viewers.

Quentin Tarantino is arguably Miramax's golden boy, and you just know he has the originals of these films on his shelf at home.

I have trouble with myself. A self-proclaimed Asian film lover in bed with the company that's doing to most damage to the scene. I have to wonder whether he's ever tried to throw his weight around on this matter, or if he just accepts it so long as he has a good business relationship with them. For a man who claims to have such knowledge and respect for artful cinema, I'd hope the answer is the former.

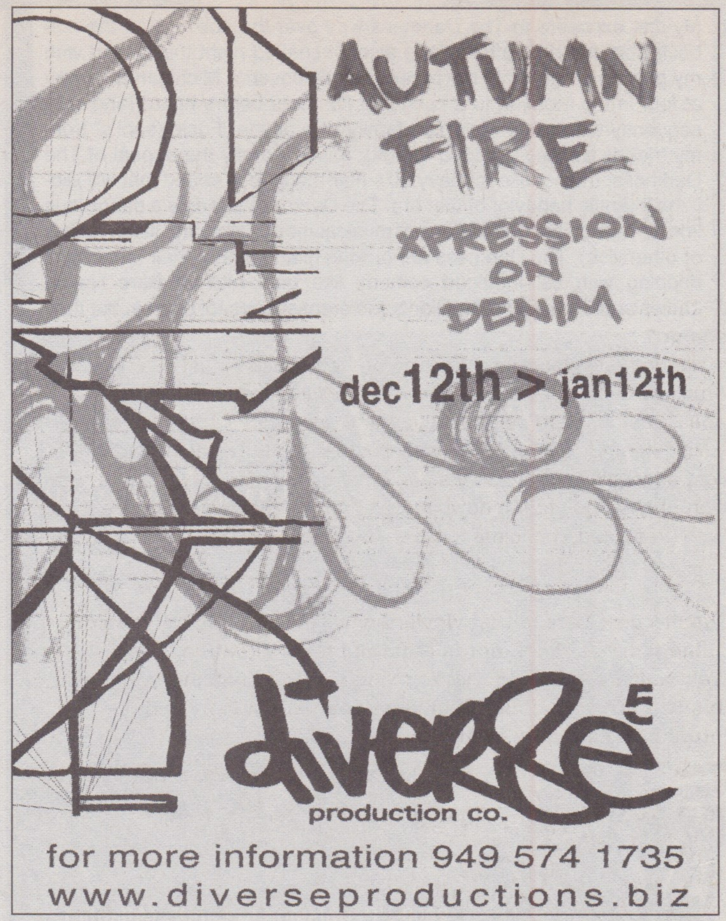
Comments on Kill Bill, which certainly tips it's hat to Asain films--and Reservoir Dogs for that matter.

It's a good thing whenever someone helps open people up to movies they might never have seen otherwise. However Kill Bill, in my opinion, leans more heavily upon the chop-socky, blood-squirting type images that are seen in the sterotypes of these films. There's nothing wrong with this. It's just that combined with Miramax's treatment of these films, it isn't helping change peoples' views of Asian films. I don't expect Tarantino to change his artistic vision. It's just that those who know Asian cinema will take a different--and in no way necessarily bad--experience away from this film than those who only know the sterotypes. As far as Reservoir Dogs - Quentin has taken a lot of heat for pulling that particular scene from City on Fire. I personally believe it just goes to show how influential Asian films are even on Hollywood films, even when they're not specifically made to pay homage as Kill Bill was.

I'm not tuned into Asian films as much as I'd like to be. I just saw Dark Water last week and loved it, but other than that, I don't see too many. Any I should make a point to see?

There are the popular kung-fu classics like Drunken Master II or Iron Monkey; art-house dramas like Wong Kar-Wai's Chungking Express; the controversial Japanese dark comedy/thriller Battle Royale. Korea has really come into its own in the past couple years with hit after hit, including titles such as Shiri, Joint Security Area, and Memento Mori. As for new films - a lot of people are hoping that the recent Infernal Affairs films mark a return to Hong Kong's best days. Any number of fansites such as hkfilm.net, cityonfire.com, will give a lot of insight into what is out there and help a newcomer find a place to start exploring. People on Asian film forums usually have no lack of ideas on what to watch, and are usually eager to spread the word on new discoveries, as well as warn people which versions are best.

I'll leave you with this tidbit. The film Hero debuted in China in 2002, which is when Miramax acquired the distro rights for it. It showed all over Europe and received high praise from critics. American critics who saw it agree it is a contender for an academy award, both for best foriegn film and for Jet Li's performance. Miramax told director Zhang Yimou they would not only release the film in theaters in 2003, but also send a copy to the Academy for Oscar nods. They did niether. American audiences still have not seen Hero. As of the writing of this, Miramax is claiming a 2004 release with 35 minutes of footage cut out! Go to the site alliance.hellninjacommando.net and send a letter to Miramax (remember, respecful letters will go further toward the cause). Sign the petition. Lastely, go get of these films before Miramax starts suing individual viewers.



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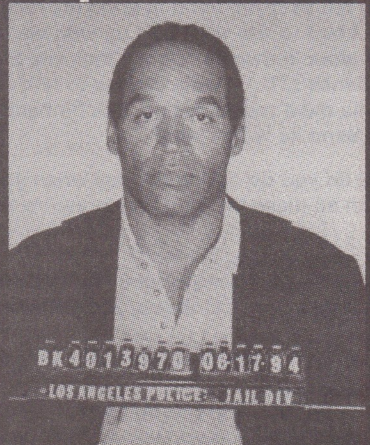
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The Darkness

by Jeff Mckibben

My first exposure to The Darkness was over the holidays on the ride back from the bars after a long alcohol soaked night that ended with my playing air guitar in my parent's snow-covered Michigan driveway at four in the morning to a song that I'd never before heard (and subsequently waking up my entire family with all the "Fuck Yeah!'s" from my friends as they dropped me off): this is exactly the appeal of The Darkness; they evoke a heavy 80's hair-metal rock sound that will illicit the infantile behavior of that era. The Darkness straddle a dangerous line as musicians: pretension vs. musical merit. Upon first listen (sober or otherwise), The Darkness are fucking hilarious. But their music isn't dripping with self-indulged comedy like geek-rockers Bare Naked Ladies and They Might Be Giants (different sounds, of course, but they all are comical for comedy's sake). So then, does The Darkness take themselves seriously? One could look at their image - that of leopard print chest-less leotards, big hair, and other such inanities of Poison, Motley Crue, et al. - and draw the conclusion that no, they don't, surely not. The Darkness are, in fact, sonically proficient, and if you cut through that 80's image and get to the heart of The Darkness sound, you'll clearly see not only are they, A: marketing geniuses but, B: excellent musicians. But then you'll listen to the absurd lyrics, or simply look at the absurd names of their tracks, with such titles as "Get Your Hands Off Of My Woman" or "Love On The Rocks With No Ice," and you'll find yourself thinking that this could be the dumbest shit you've ever heard. And perhaps it is. The Darkness acknowledge that they maybe surface rock, but they do so with such a genuine charm that strips away all the pretense generally found in pop/rock. However their sound is problematic, it may be generational because it evokes the nostalgia of the 80's and as such it's perhaps short-sidely charismatic for only those that can recall the greatness of the what-the-fuck-were-we-thinking stylings of 80's rock. But The Darkness does indeed rock. Listen to them again, please, for your sake, regardless of your opinion of 80's hair-metal. They rock in all the false ways that rock music should and does rock, only The Darkness succeed in a fashion that is blistering with magnetism and simplistic appeal, bereft of idyllic rock fortune and glory but base with the falsetto of idyll rock. Though The Darkness may be overly criticized for their silliness, it's used to promote the lost pageantry of Big Guitar rock antics. The Darkness' appeal is more than merely entertainment value, if it were only entertainment we'd quickly get bored and concluded that this is, indeed, the dumbest shit we've ever heard. Music is meant to mean something more, to make some connection. And The Darkness succeeds in making that connection, which must mean there is some hidden emotion inside or underneath their absurd image, those ridiculous lyrics. But perhaps the great appeal behind The Darkness is that they successfully mix a mockery of, rather than homage to, 80's sound with the sincerity of musical craft - combing comedy with pretentiousness, once thought to be mutually exclusive.

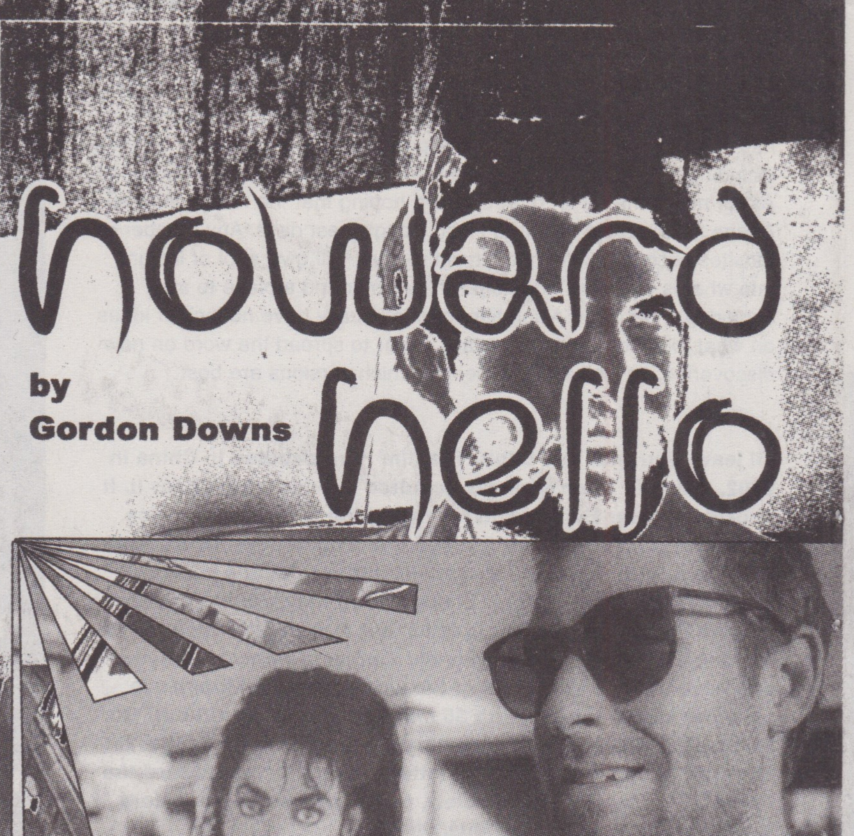
2003 "Permission to Land" (Atlantic)
2002 "I Believe In A Thing Called Love" EP (Must Destroy)

howard hello

by Gordon Downs

If you're a regular reader of Modern Fix, you've probably seen the name Kenseth Thibideau in these pages before. A versatile multi-instrumentalist, Thibideau's current side project, the raucous outfit known as Sleeping People was featured in our last issue. And to tell ya truth, upon hearing his recent work as Howard Hello, I had to see what was up with his latest amazing piece of work known as "Don't Drink His Blood." (Temporary Residence LTD.) I had a chance to talk with Thibideau, after his most recent outing with Pinback. Yes. Yet another amazing band he works with!

So Kenseth, what do you do during the day when you're not playing music with all these talented bands you're currently in?
"I work at a studio called Singing Serpent."
So this most recent Howard Hello album, "Don't Drink His Blood" was released back in October of 2003. How's the response to it been?
"Since then, it's been doing pretty well. I've just now been starting to get some reviews back."
So how'd you hook up with Marty Anderson?
I lived in San Francisco when I hooked up with Temporary Residence. I was in a band called Rumah Sakit, and Marty's in a band called Dilute, and we always used to play shows together."
I never heard your last band Rumah Sakit before? Is it a far cry from Sleeping People, or something sounding closer to Howard Hello?
"Basically, Sleeping People for me is like an extension of Rumah Sakit. The bass and the style I'm writng with S. P. is not a far cry from Rumah Sakit."
Can we be expecting any new Howard Hello material in 2004?
"I will do another recording; like an EP this year for Howard Hello."



2003 "Don't Drink His Blood" (Temporary Residence)
2002 "Self-Titled" (Temporary Residence)

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Frank Jordan

by Gordon Downs

Who the fuck is Frank Jordan? This power trio from Carmichael, California originally formed in 1994 as an instrumental band with two drummers. With Devin Hurely behind the skins, and Matt Ontjes on the bass, Mike Visser is the man on guitar and vocals for Frank Jordan. So I must reiterate: Who the fuck is Frank Jordan? "Frank Jordan was this guy in San Francisco who apparently tried to put a band on outdoor music," explains Visser from his home in Northern California. "We figured we'll have a better band name when something better comes along. And nothing ever came along!" With two recordings under their belt, (an EP entitled "8-Songs" and their debut full-length "Decoy") Frank Jordan is ready to unleash their latest album, "Milk The Thrills" into the world of independent music. Recorded in Southern California, "Milk The Thrills" wasn't just another typical recording session, as the trio lived in the studio itself for nearly two months. "We lived there, slept there, shit there, ate there, showered there." Visser ruminates. "We had mattress' in the studio. We'd wake up at the crack of noon and start recording. It was amazing! It was one of the best times of my life. I learned a lot from (producer) Eddie Ashworth. It was kind of like going to school for me. Towards the end though, it was kinda getting a little nutty." Visser adds. The end result is triumphant piece of work. The ten songs that comprise "Milk The Thrills" are some serious guitar-driven tunes with a frenetic business about them; liken to that of those indie-rockers who dance feverously at any given gig on any given night. Touring relentlessly for the past several years, Frank Jordan would eventually sign with Devil In The Woods Records, a staple when it comes to independent music in Northern California. After the first spin, the distortion, harmonies and riffs on "Milk The Thrills" automatically reminded me of one of the nineties finest bands - Archers of Loaf. "Really! I've never even heard them!" Visser laughs into the receiver. "I love hearing that we sound like bands that we've never listened to!" With touring plans throughout 2004 and more than likely, 2005, Frank Jordan is definitely a band to look out for this next year. Do something right next time you're in a record store and check out "Milk The Thrills."

2004 "Milk the Thrills" (Phantom)
2003 "8 Songs" (Americans Are Coming)
2002 "Enemies" (Cornerstone)
2000 "Decoy" (Cornerstone)

RUN RUN RUN

BY PR!

You know, I like this band so much, I can write 290 words on them. Before you find out why Run Run Run (or Rx3) should have a spot next to your spooge cloth, their history. Rx2 was formed in the year of terrorism, Spy Kids (made $112 million) and the death of Hank the Angry Drunken Dwarf. Xander Smith, who you might recognize from his previous band, Other Star People (I didn't) started the band, later adding guitarist Peter Martin, (was in the band Lifetime), bassist Jeremy Gritter and drummer Daniel Dod. Together, they are four. Four band members, three words in their name. Coincidence? Rx3 is based in Los Angeles, but they've got a real east coast sound, whatever the fuck that means. Kind of a Vines / Black Rebel Motorcycle Club thing going on… grimy rock that's just clean enough for the mainstream fish but acceptable levels to entertain us underground big mouth bass. What's even more interesting are the musician 'guest' spots on their latest release, the EP "Drizzle", almost a dozen in total, most notably Phil Cunningham (guitarist of New Order) and Tom Brayton (drummer for the Dwarves). Although I honestly couldn't tell how much they influenced Rx3, the EP's great and really the start of solid rock band. Another reason this EP rocks is that the band and their label, The First Time Records, included an extra CD with this EP, a 'VCD' with Rx3's video for Skyscraper (track three). For those of you from America/Canada, the VCD format will be completely alien to you, though there is a 60-80% chance that your DVD player will accept the format (most computers can play a VCD). Decent video, excellent EP… what more can you ask?

www.runrunrun.tv

2003 "Drizzle" EP (The First Time Records)

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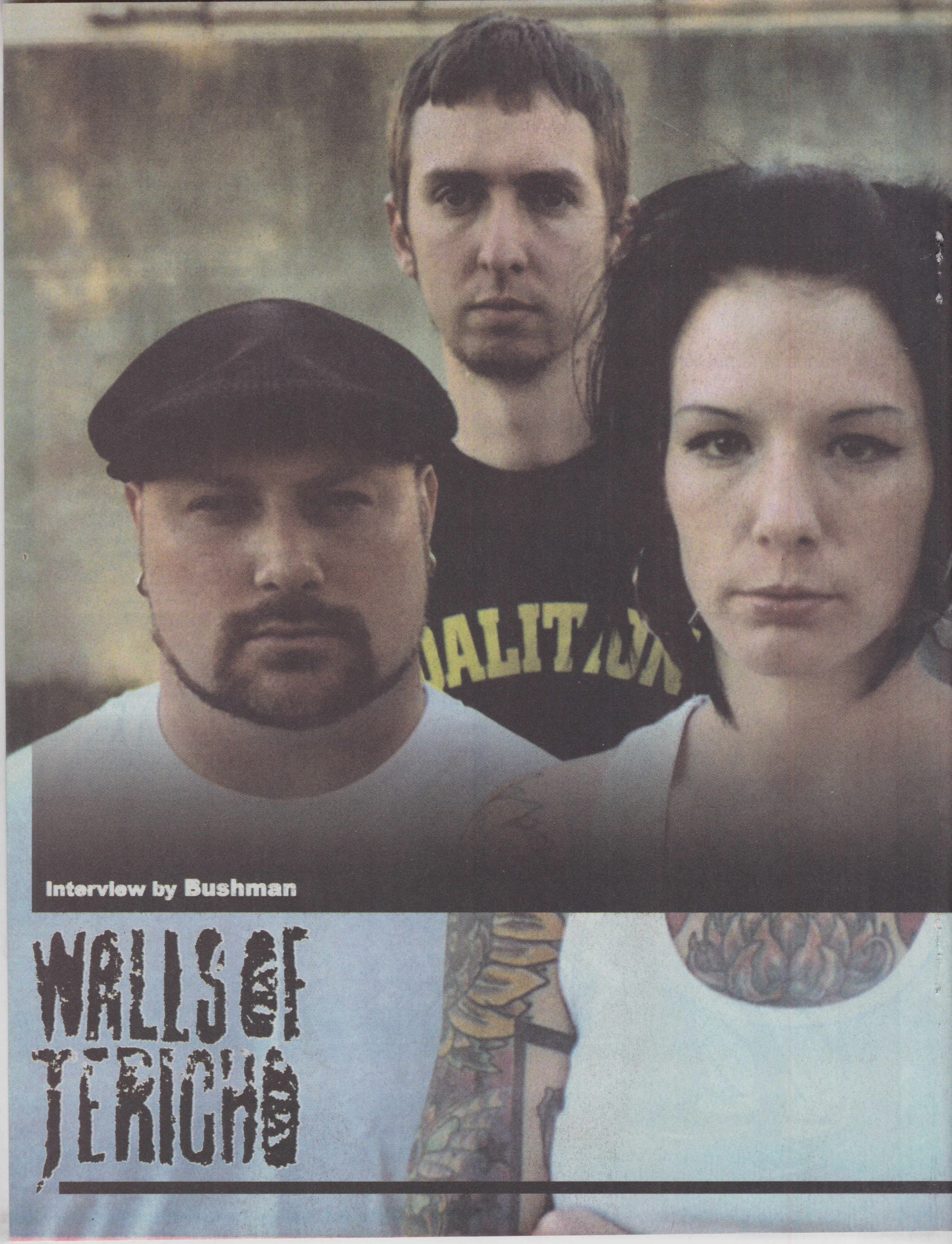
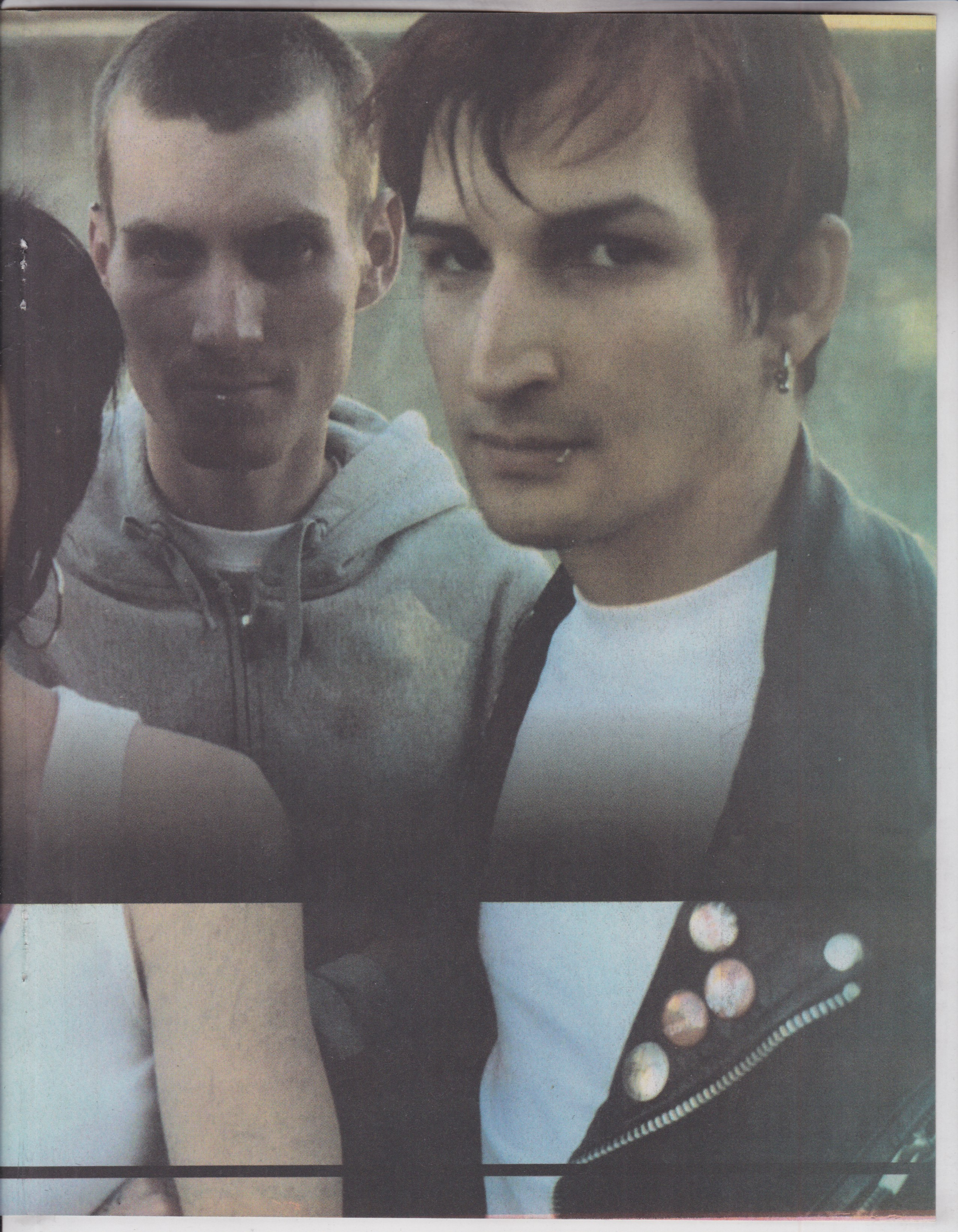


Interview by Bushman

WALLS OF JERICHO



MOR
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2001

photo john mckaig

WALLS of JERICHO

God brought down the Walls of Jericho with a thunderous vengeance. How appropriately named is this Michigan unit. Tearing apart the middle ground between metal and hardcore, the music attacks on most levels. Aggression battles against speed, but a structure of determined riffage and empowering breakdowns elevates the band above the simpler approach of many of their hardcore peers. And the throat for this musical assault is a hard as nails girl from the Midwest named Candace Kucsulain. While the uninitiated might smile thinking, "Oh cute, the hardcore band has a girl singer." those thoughts are put to an abrupt end once they hear the gravel laced anger she spews forth. It's a physical presence that apparently carries well into the live setting. Just days before this interview, Candace caught a fist to the face at a live show and busted up her nose pretty bad. But she finished the set, broken nose and all (remember, she's singing through that broken nose, not to mention squaring off with a hardcore crowd that just busted said nose). How hardore is that? Harder than you. Speaking to Candace, she doesn't come off as hard as the image, but there always seems to be something bubbling just below the surface. Like it wouldn't take a whole lot to switch from her natural sweet girl disposition to something that will most likely kick your ass if you disrespect.

So I hear you had a rough show?
I did have a rough show. I got punched.

On purpose?
It was an accident. It was in the chaos while we were playing. It was like 4 songs before we were done. We finished the set.

You finished the set with a broken nose?
Yes we did.

You are so hardcore.
Yeah, some guy definitely did a windmill into my fucking face.

Did you hit him back?
I told him that I did get a free shot. But he felt really bad and he got me a card. What happened was my cartilage went one way and my septum went the other way and the actual bone itself isn't broke so they can't fix. In six months I have to see how it goes.

Detroit is home for Walls of Jericho. The Murder City. Is that were all the aggression came from?
Well, that and experience. I think DC had us beat at some point as the Murder City.

Why the two year hiatus?
We lost our original drummer who left to go to college in Seattle. We tried out a bunch of people, but nobody could fit musically and personally. We couldn't sacrifice that. We had called Alexia recently, and he was living in Europe and still in Catharsis, and that was our number one guy, and when he decided to move back to the US last April, he gave us a call and we hooked things up again.

"All Hail The Dead" is the new release. Where do you see the growth in this one from previous releases?
The growth comes from the fact of those two years off and we had a lot of pent up emotions that all of us wanted to take care of within the band, and we didn't have that outlet. So once the two years was up and we got to rock out again, it was pretty amazing.

Did taking time off give perspective and the band?
For sure. This is what we all wanted to do. For most of our lives we were all just ready to rock out hardcore style, but over those years you have time to grow in the sense that we all like different music and all have matured a little bit more. Definitely had an easier way to let it out. We all like different types of music so once we got back together, we combined it all. It made it a good thing for all of us. A lot of it is chug chug hardcore, but then a lot of it is just experimental of what we do like and what we are trying out.

While probably defined as a 'hardcore' band, there are so many tangents of straight up thrash and metal.
It's definitely a mix of a lot of things. A little rock in there to.

What is the significance to the album title "All Hail The Dead" (which is also the title of the opening track)?
It has to do with how all of us feel about the industry of music as well as the marketing. It's very raw. Kind of like, no matter what you try and throw at us, we're not gonna take it.

> What happened was my cartilage went one way and my septum went the other way...

The album art is striking as well. How did you get Josh (owner of Trustkill Records) to do that?
He was the one who liked it the most. We did have somebody else take over and do the artwork for that. We knew what we wanted, but we couldn't portray it. I do believe he did a really good job. It's striking. It's disturbing.

You've been into the hardcore scene from an early age. What was it about the scene that appealed to you?
The aggression of it. The first time I went to a show, I saw a bunch of guys beatin' on each other and everybody is screaming about emotions they can't let out during everyday life. And for me, I was just kind of an angry individual. I needed that outlet. I needed to be able to punch somebody in the face and scream 'fuck you' once in awhile. There is something to say. There is a message which really caught me. I always felt like I was missing something in my life. The passion about it is what really caught my eye.

What made you such an angry individual?
Experience. Family. All that bullshit that life throws in your lap that you have to live through. A lot of people of do have to deal with it, but not to the extent as many others do.

Do you see that theme of dissatisfaction appearing often in hardcore?
Yeah. It's people that haven't had life handed to them, and they know something better can come along, and they won't settle for anything less than that.

I've seen you referred to as "One of the best female vocalists in hardcore". Do you resent that word "female" in there? No one says, "He's one of the best male vocalists in hardcore."
I don't resent that because I think being a female is a wonderful thing. It's an empowering thing because so many women don't do it. So I don't take it any negative stride at all. I'm excited that some people may say there is a roll model in that, and that's great to me. But I do know that it's in all of us and unfortunately, many people try to beat that down. So knowing I can overcome that by being a female, I'm all about that.

Do you (if at all) feel that the 'girl in a hardcore' band has affected your bands career (either positively or negatively)?
I think definitely positively. A lot of people are like, "What is she gonna sound like?" and I come out and tear everybody apart. People are very intrigued by that. Which is a good thing.

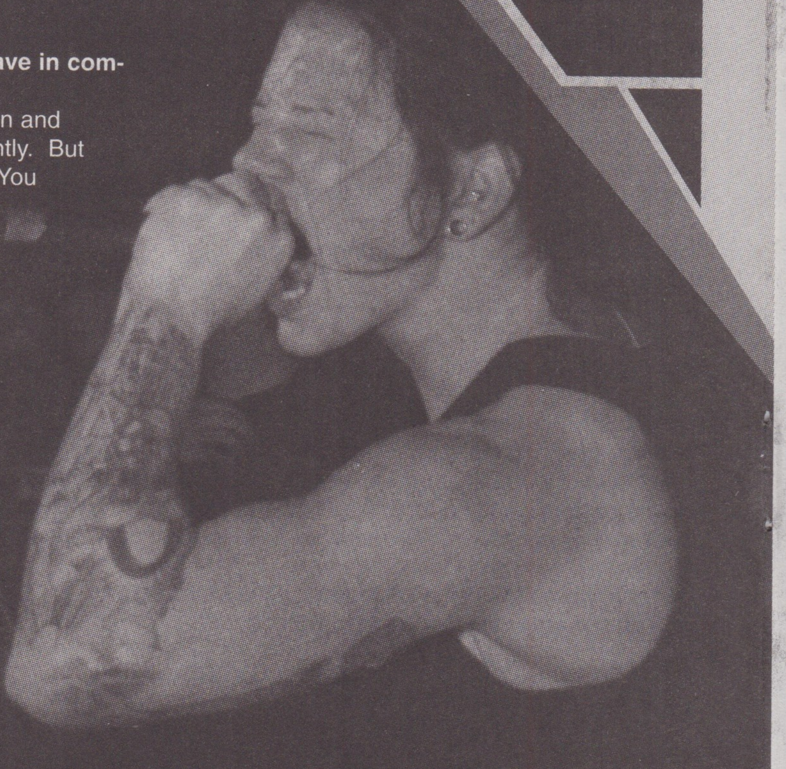
What different perspectives on the hardcore scene might you have in comparison to your male peers?
As much as people want to say there is not a difference between men and women, there is. We look at things differently and see things differently. But we should be all treated as equal, but there are always differences. You should always listen to your female.

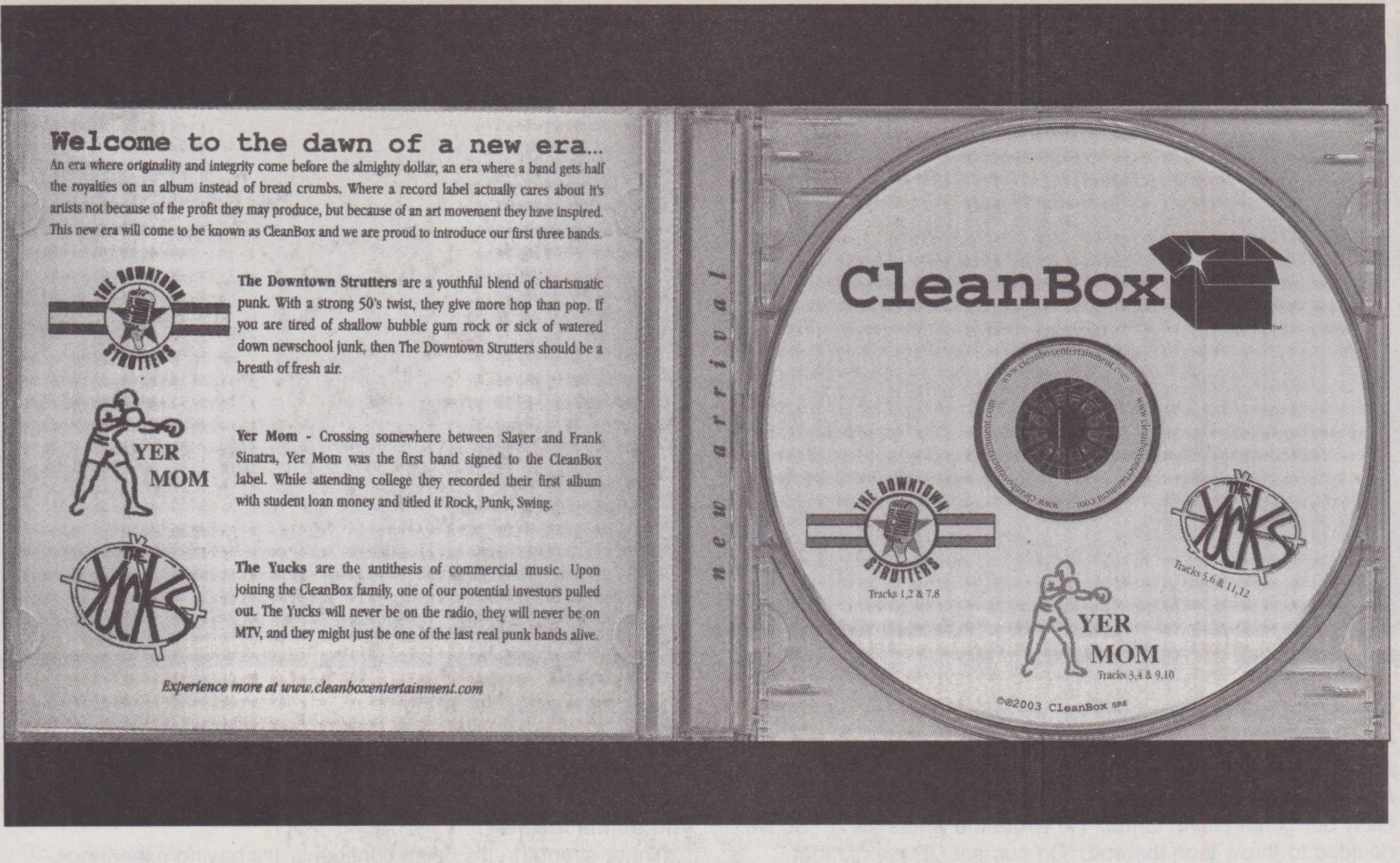
What was the significance to picking Walls of Jericho for your name? I'm sure you must be familiar with the heavy religious associations that go with it?
There is, but we do not take a stand on actual religion. Some of us are, some of us aren't. But it has to do with the empowerment of it. Of what Walls of Jericho is. And honestly, it was in the band before I was, the name itself. But it's a good name.

Who is doing the background moaning/singing on "1:43"? That softer vocal element in there really stood out.
That was me. I want to incorporate that in our band because that is something that I do love to do, is sing. But we try to keep it very hardcore. It is an element of me that is good for other people to see.

Candace Kucsulain

Soda: Cream Soda
Candy Bar: Baby Ruth
Drug: Captain Morgan
Movie: Alien
TV show: CSI
Actor: Edward Norton
Book: Invisible Monsters.
Tshirt: Anything white and girlie as fuck.





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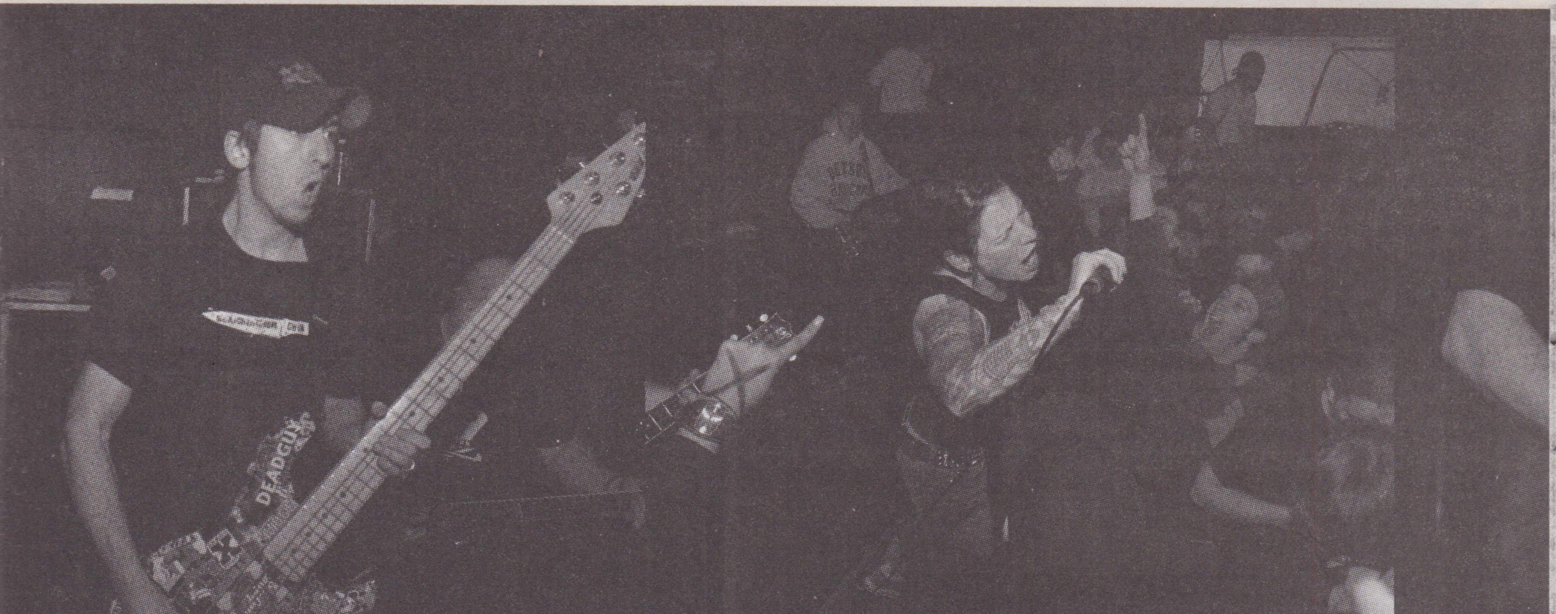


Walls of Jericho

Where did the instrumental album closer "To Be Continued..." come from? Not the typical Walls of Jericho song.
No. Not at all. It's something that we really wanted to do, especially our guitar player Chris. He wrote the whole thing. So we decided to throw it on the end. On our last CD we did that acoustic song with just him and I, so we wanted to do something else like that.

I notice you have a lot of ink. When did you start getting tattoos?
I was 15 when I got my first tattoo.

Isn't that illegal?
Yeah it probably was, but my mom took me though.

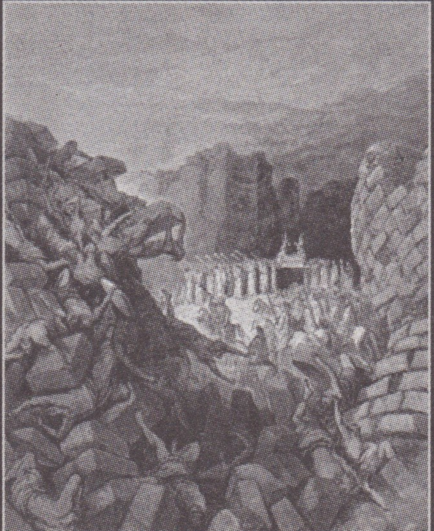
You have a hip mom?
Yeah, yeah. She's hip. She's bought me a few of them.

Who does your work?
I've definitely collected, but know I have certain people I let do my tattoos. Aaron our bassplayer does tattoo's. He does a lot of my shit.

Hardcore is an aggressive, powerful form of music. How do you define 'power'?
It's inner strength. It's being confident. It's having experience. Taking all of that and using it to your advantage. Being knowledgeable about what you got going on in your life, and how to work life.

What was your favorite toy as a kid? I'm guessing it wasn't an Easy Bake Oven or a Barbie Doll.
Do definitely was not. Shit, let me think, that's way back. Definitely my bike. It was purple, cause I was a girl, but had like a BMX bike when I was younger. That was my favorite.

Feel like getting political? I notice your bands lyrics (at least not on 'All Hail The Dead') generally steer away from heavy politics. Here's a forum to be heard.
The one thing that we do discuss as a band, politically wise, is we are very 'rape-awareness'. Like 'Another Anthem for the



Jericho is most associated as the oldest city in biblical times (archeological remains dating back to 8000BC) located on the west bank of Palestine. The story is actually about how an Israelite named Joshua attacked the town of Jericho (with God's blessing and help) by having him and his priests march around the city in circles for six days blowing ram horns, and on the seventh day, God brought down the walls of Jericho which acted like ramps to allow the invading Israelite army (in the name of God mind you) to kill every inhabitant of the city, save one who helped out the Israelite spies. God needs spies.

Hopeless' [from the "All Hail The Dead" album], in every single CD that we've done, we've had a song about rape, and about coping, and about standing up against it. It's a subject that people tend to forget. That's for sure. People tend to overlook it and think it will just fix itself. It is in the hardcore scene, and a lot of people want to think that it's not around in the hardcore scene because we are supposed to be different and have different views, but it still goes on. Maybe it's not so extreme, but there are still cases like, you'll have these 30-year-old guys who are dating 15-year-old girls, you are a fucking pedophile. I don't care if you are both punk rock or not. And that definitely gets under my skin. There is somebody in the Detroit scene that we know and I won't play shows where he fucking works. Like I don't want nothing to do with that. Like I said, it might not be to the extreme of rape, but it's still there. And unfortunately, men tend to feel like they can't speak about it as much as women do.

On a different level, I see it in the assholes that think it's cool to grab a handful when a girl goes crowd surfing at a show.
I've definitely experienced that when I was younger. And I definitely punched a bunch of guys.

As a singer, you get very confrontational and up close with your crowds, do you find that still goes on now while you are playing?
I've gotten some stupid bullshit where some drunk stupid fuck in the crowd wants to yell something about me being a woman. It doesn't happen a lot. I think it has to do with my presence. I try to come off as that I'm here for a reason. But that's kind of what you have to do. You have to demand respect from people otherwise they don't want to give it to you. So if it ever does happen, I try to be humorous with it and humiliate them. Make people laugh at them.

Gimme three bands everyone should be listening to right now.
Definitely the AKAs. They are fucking amazing. As well as Silverstein and Armor For Sleep. Everybody else we've gone out with, I already kinda new. Everybody else knows them as well. But those three bands we did two weeks with them, and they just blew my mind. Mike Ski, I love that guy, the singer of the AKAs. He's doing something with himself that he should be proud of. Good stage presence, good sound. Armor For Sleep and Silverstein, they are all young kids and they are just amazing. They are so into what they do. It really blows me away. The grace that have and the confidence that they bring out on stage. They rock the crowd all the time.

Give me some words of wisdom. Let's leave the kids smarter for having read this.
Seriously, for anybody, you should always treat people with respect. Way too many people forget that and look too much to what everybody is wearing, or what people are doing. And you have to like people for who they are, not what they do. It's so important to try and find out who people are and worry about that. That's something so many people tend to forget.

All Hail The Dead
(2004 - Trustkill)

A Day & A Thousand Years [CD-Single]
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All Hail The Dead
(2004 - Trustkill)

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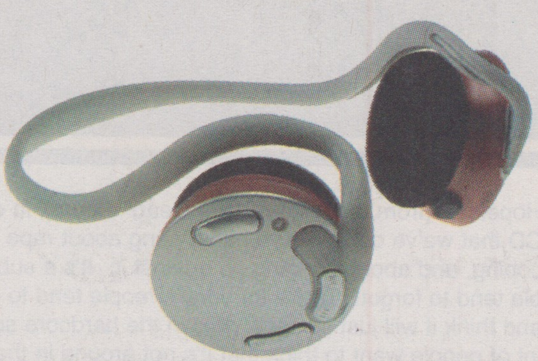

Mojo I MP3 Player

TDK

This was a no brainer; just put the MP3 player in the headphones and off you go. Lightweight and no wires. Built into Mojo 1 is 128 megs of memory (which works out to about 25-30 average length songs, more than a few hours), and it comes with a MMC/SD memory card slot for even more expandability. The software that's included with the packaging at the time of pressing was NOT available on the TDK website, so hold on to your disk. The TDK CD also comes with two types of MP3 programs to organize your MP3s to the Mojo 1 player, which make uploading MP3s fairly easy. A line-out port on the Mojo makes jacking into a car or home stereo simple, so you can share your tunes with the crew.

Only a couple minor negative design issues to consider. There is no graphic interface, so you don't know which track you're on, making the user utilize the track skip button most. The problem is, the designers embedded the track skip button within the bulge of plastic where the neckpiece connects to the headphones, making it difficult to manipulate. All the other buttons are raised off of the players surface and easy to push. I also had the occasional freeze when trying to skip tracks (turning the unit off, then on, clears that problem). The other concern is the battery. The positive connector is attached to the underside of the hinged latch that keeps the battery in. Which puts the whole integrity of the product on that single hinge. Though with a little care, I can't see this as being a serious issue.

This player is best for the portability advantage of the headphones (workouts, walks, traveling, etc.) as the lack of interface makes it a bit clumsy for someone looking for their first MP3 player. As I do not 'workout', I use mine mostly for shopping in grocery stores. It allows me to be anti-social in the hippest of ways.

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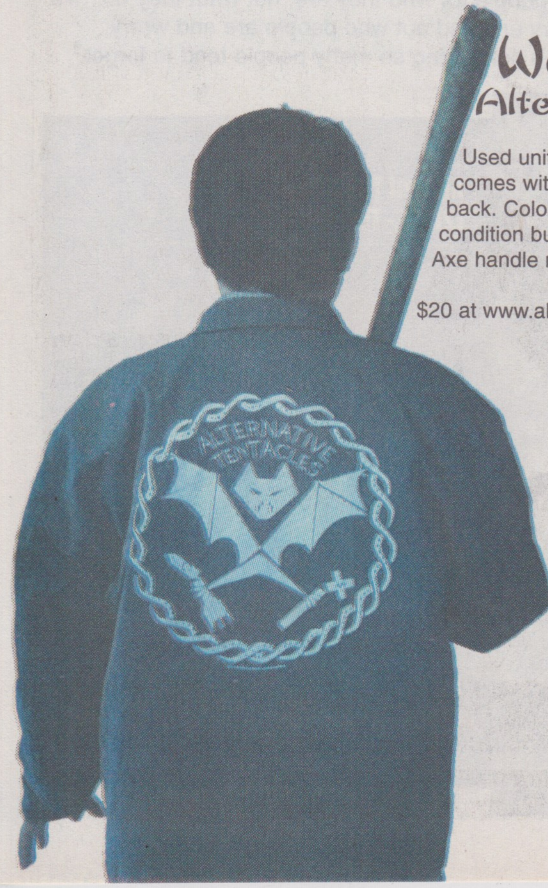

Shoes

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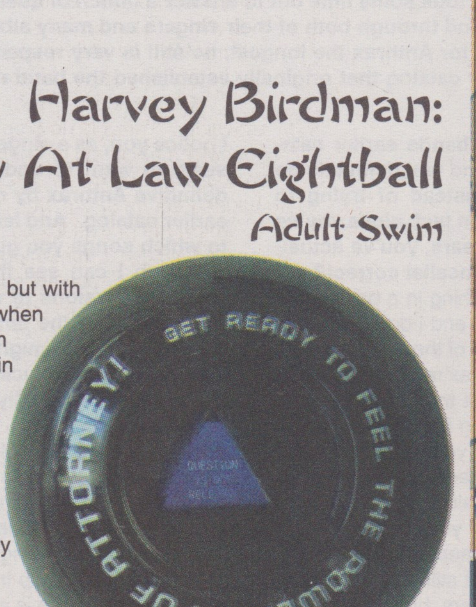
Harvey Birdman: Attorney At Law Eightball

Adult Swim

Hey, it's a magic eightball, but with law-oriented answers. So when you ask if (MF writer) Thom Cooper's going to get laid in Vegas next weekend, the answer was 'THE JURY IS OUT," stirring the office employees into fits of manical laughter. Plus, if you crammed the eightball into a sock, you could really fuck someone up, Steven Segal style.



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ANTHRAX

interview with singer john bush

by Bushman

Anthrax is an institution of American Metal. The first wave of thrash metal that swept through the mid to late 80's had about five bands that really mattered. Metallica, Megadeth, Pantera, Slayer and Anthrax. The first on that list took a left turn at "wuss" a long time ago. The second progressed themselves right out of a great thrash band into a mediocre hard rock unit with flashy solos. Phil is over Pantera and onto different bands. Slayer still kicks the shit out of all of you, but one cannot live on Slayer alone. And Anthrax shares one other admirable trait with Slayer, and that is they never broke up. In fact, they released an album entitled "We've Come For You All" earlier last year and are currently in the middle of a zombie filled video shoot for the opening track "What Doesn't Die".

I caught singer John Bush doing his taxes (proclaiming 2003 was actually one of Anthrax's better years, fiscally speaking) but took some time out to answer a bunch of questions from an 80's metal kid who had followed the band through both of their singers and many albums. Even though John Bush has been the vocalist for Anthrax the longest, he still is very respectful, if not a little in awe himself, of the bands earlier catalog that originally established the band as a significant contribution to metal.

It's great you embrace the bands earlier catalog, but I've seen you live, and you definitely do the "John Bush" vocals instead of trying to mimic Joe's higher vocals. In fact, since you've been in the band over ten years, you've actually been the bands longest vocalist correct?

Yeah. The voice is a pivotal thing in a band. And Joey had a real distinct voice, and I do to, but they are different. I think the sound of the band evolved, but it always sounds like Anthrax regardless of who is singing it. But for me, I just try to take what he did with the old songs and sing it my way. He had a higher voice than I did. As you get older, those highs start to diminish a bit. Because I listen to old records I did with Armored Saint and I am like, "I could never do that." So as you get older, your voice gets naturally a little deeper. I try to sing them in the way that I can that still sounds like the original style and version of them, but my way, and doing it in the way that I can do it.

I notice you, as a singer, and Anthrax as a band seem to want to underline this lineup as the definitive Anthrax by re-recording some of the earlier catalog. And letting the fans vote online to which songs you guys do is a choice move. Although I can see the benefit of presenting recorded versions of songs that more closely resemble what the fans are going to hear live, do you fear you might upset purist fans that don't want you to fuck with it? Like when they go back and digitally re-enhance movies to make them "better".

That's a good point. My goal is not to "redo" the bands catalog at all. As a matter of fact, when the band discussed this thing, they were like, "Let's do 20 songs." My attitude was that was too many. And they aren't all going to go on this record. They will probably show up in different places like a B-side here, and there is a box set we are eventually going to do. I don't even want to do that many songs because I don't want the perception to be

that we are trying to redo the bands catalog. That's not it. Those records are amazing and they stand on their own. They were very successful and people are very close to those records. My goal is to just say, "Here is a few songs that we do live, that people have been hearing me sing live for 11 years now, so here is how they sound. Here is another way to listen to them." The same as it would be if you did hear a live record or a DVD. A DVD is more visual, that's something that we want to do. The standard live record that bands used to put out, they just don't seem to have the intensity that they used to have. At least compared to records I grew up with as live albums. So we didn't want to do just a standard live record. Our goal is to get into the studio and do this as raw and live as possible. But have this kind of be like a live album. I always try to respect everything that's happened in Anthrax's history because it's obviously laid the groundwork and been very important to the band. And I have my own integrity and pride when it comes down to it as well. I think we try to do the right thing at the end of the day. And I don't want to come off as "Mr. Joe Humility" because I'm not THAT much like that. Although when it comes to lead singers, I think most of them are pricks. I am definitely the anti-lead singer. I've never been like that. Even in the early days when I started playing music and people were like, "You gotta be more of a singer, a rock star." And I was like, "I don't know what you are talking about. I don't know what you mean by that." I literally never wanted to be that. Which is kind of a conundrum for a lead singer. You gotta be the front guy.

I think the key is to do it on stage, and then leave it on stage.
I always trip out when I see a band like U2. The guy just played to 80,000 people, and at the end of the night, you back to your hotel room, and you are alone. That must be a trippy sensation to some degree. It's like, "WOW". And then you go and have to take a shit. And you go into the bathroom and you have a magazine, and that brings it all back down.

People just get too lost in the fantasy that is TV.
For me, it's always been important to not lose myself in the person I am on stage. That's a part of me, and a big part. But that's not the only part of my existence. That's one aspect of John Bush. There's an aspect of me that likes to play basketball. And read a book. So it's important for me and that keeps me as grounded as possible.

[Feeling a true kinship in this next question...] So what kind of names did you get called in school?
I'm sure I got called "Bushman". That's one thing I got called. I got like, "John Shrub" and "John Tree". Plenty of things. And now. Look at the association now. Whenever I do anything relating to writing my name down for somebody, "Oh, are you related?" and it's like, "NO! I'm not related".

I saw your VH1 Behind the Music Special. Do you think that was partially spurred by the whole Anthrax connection in the press?
It was funny because VH1 approached us about doing it, and then it kind of went into a limbo state, and then it was kind of rebirthed. I can't tell you the exact timeline of it. The VH1 Behind the Music's... I can tell you how those happen. Band starts, rise to fame, tragedy, phoenix rising in the end, blah blah blah. And for us, it was the perfect story because there was plenty of that in the bands career. So I'm sure that [Athrax postal scare] didn't hurt and it is a great story. It's funny because when the whole Anthrax thing happened, so many people obviously asked us about what we are going to do. "Are you going to change your name?" We never really sat and pondered it. The whole thing probably lasted about three weeks with the whole frenzy and paranoia. My whole attitude was to just chill and ride this thing out because it's going to fade away as the top story in the media. Then we will have better vision on what we should do in terms of going on and how approach this. I can't imagine the guys in this band, especially the three original members, Frankie, Charlie and Scott, ever making music together and that not being called "Anthrax". We just couldn't uproot and say, "OK, we are now called The Windmills". It's just not going to happen. So we had to just wait and kind of let that thing fade away. And it did. It was horrible, don't get me wrong. It was a weird time and a weird thing to go through. But it wasn't like we were sending it out and going "Let's do this. It will be a lot of promotion for us." Because record sales actually started to increase at the same time. So it was a mixed emotion. Everywhere you

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look, it's "Anthrax", but it's bad. The frenzy got to a point where Fortune Magazine and Wall Street Journal started contacting us. And we knew once that happened, it would probably have this weird slant in it and it wouldn't make us look good. So that's when we actually did a press release, and whenever anybody ever asked us, other than music publications that we could talk very candid about, and then we just say "Here." That was when CNN got it, and in the press release Scott made a joke, and he made it very clear. He said, "The band Anthrax is changing their name to "Basket Full of Puppies". And then the next line was, "It's a shame that I have to joke about this." And all CNN did was take the first line and started putting it on the ticker for the telecast. We were all going, "Are you kidding me? That's what they are printing?" And if that's what they were saying in regards to us which we know is not true, what else are they saying that is not true. That made me lose a lot of respect for CNN and the way they handle news.

I know this is ancient history, but some of the kids might not know, but you used to be the singer for Armored Saint. How was that decision to leave that band to join Anthrax back in the day? Did you have to leave Armored Saint?
Yeah, I had to quit to join Anthrax. We made the last record that we made before we broke up called "Symbol of Salvation" that was eventually our biggest selling record. But it wasn't enough to take Armored Saint to that next level. That was the thing about the band, we had this international status. We had a cool cult following. But we just couldn't get it to the next level where bands like Anthrax and Slayer and Megadeth were at. So it was just a logical thing for me to do. I couldn't say no at that time. Not that I wanted to, but it was difficult because two of the main guys in Armored Saint with me are guys I grew up with since I was 8 years old. So we have a history of friendship that supercedes even being in music together. That part was really difficult. It was like going through this gnarly breakup. You know that it's right, but it's really hard never the less.

Did the rest of Armored Saint support your decision?
They did. We were lucky that years later we got to make a reunion record so to speak when there was some down time with Anthrax. The guys in Anthrax, Scott and Charlie did the S.O.D. project and they put out a record. So I did mine at the same time. It was great. It was a lot of fun. It gave a lot of perspective. In Armored Saint, it was something like, we had this huge buzz when we came out. And never was able to get to that next level. And it created this weird albatross feeling around our neck that like, "Oh man, we never made it. We never made it." So when we were able to do this other record and go and play some shows and we did these festivals in Europe and they were great. When we were able to do all that, it was so pressure free because we had no expectations at all. It helped me in the way I perceive Anthrax to this day. We've gone through a lot of stumbling blocks to. It makes me go, "You know what? Why are you doing this? The most important reason is because you love music and you want to make music." And sure I want to be able to pay my bills and do all those other things, but this is the reason I'm doing it. And that helped me out a lot.

I must comment, you said that when you were in Armored Saint you guys didn't feel like you "made it", that's really so much from perspective though. As a kid sitting growing up in the midwest, seeing Armored Saint on Headbangers Ball on MTV, you guys MADE IT. We bought your albums. You were on a legitimate record label. You got to tour the world. A lot of people would think that's "made it".
You're right. You're right. That's true. There were some amazing opportunities and awesome accomplishments that band had. So believe me, I don't downplay that either.

Among The Living (1987)

The Sound of White Noise (1993)

The two definitive Anthrax albums according to lead singer John Bush

Obviously, compared to the financial success of Anthrax...
I guess that's what I was trying to say. Thanks for kinda helping me.

I've been in bands to and my musician side is calling you out.
And I'm so down with that. Believe me, there were some times in Armored Saint, all we had was the music because we were dropped from labels and we couldn't get a new deal. One of the guitar players, one of the main players ended up dying from Leukemia. So we had all these things going on in our life, but thinking the main thing was the music. It was actually a beautiful time in the band and we had nothing.

But that's a reality one learns about the music industry with age and perspective. When you are 15 years old and see a video on MTV, you just assume they are on a label and making a million dollars, not realizing only the elite of the elite make the tons of money.
These days there is such an emphasis on what bands sell. What I wish they really would do is inform people what bands make. Because there are so many labels that spend so much money, so a band will sell a million records, they'll have a Platinum record, and they will still be in the hole with the way the money was spent.

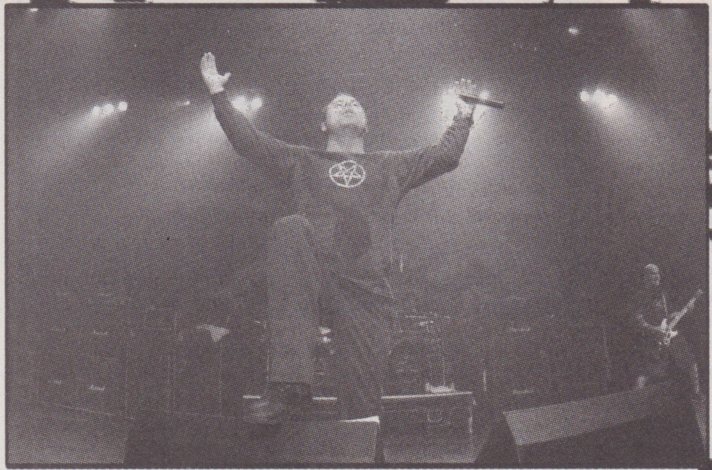
The business model is wrong.
Right. It's like, "Hey wait a minute. If you spent 5 Million to make that record go Platinum, that's not really that major of an accomplishment as I'm concerned".

It just proves you can sell anything if you market it right.
Exactly. And that part really frustrates me. Because there are so many amazing groups that are on a lower level, but are fucking awesome, that really should require at least a little more promotion. I just wish it were a little bit more of an even playing field in terms of promotion. But of course, what am I talking about. This is the music business.

That's why the mid-level indie label is doing fairly well on the whole business model.
Very well.

To put it in easy numbers (and over-generalize), when you are on a major, they spend so much money on promotion, you have to move a million units before the artist starts to see significant money. But the indies don't spend so much money, and if you move 50,000 units as an artist, you will see money in your pocket.
One of my good friends is the main guy at Metal Blade Records. Armored Saint started with Metal Blade so I've been friends with him for 20 years. We just had a long conversation and I asked him how things were going, and he said things were going great because all the majors are struggling, it's doing amazing things for the indies.

What label are you guys on nowadays?
We are with Sanctuary here in the states, through BMG. In Europe we are with Nuclear Blast. And JVC in Japan. There has been some positive and some negative. The positive is we can see what the other two labels are doing contrary to the one label. Usually, if you have a label that has you world wide, they just have more of a vision for the whole thing. We are a little scattered. Nuclear Blast has done an amazing job for us in Europe. A killer job. Sanctuary has been in a position where... they kind of ... the truth of the matter is that our record is already out in Japan, and it was already going to come out in Europe and our American deal was a situation with a contract that was just fucked. Bad. We needed to get out of the contract so we could release our record here, otherwise it was going to come out everywhere but America. That would have been a nightmare. As it stands, it still came out four weeks late. With the circumstances with



downloading, you don't really want to do that. It kind of works against you. So they did bail us out of our contract, and we were grateful to them for doing that.

Who bailed you out of what contract?
Sanctuary bailed us out of a contract we had in America with another label that went belly-up called Beyond. But because they did that, I don't know if they had enough preparation to set up the record as well and as big as the other two companies did. And this is America. This is our home country. We want to do the best we can. We want to do as well as the other territories are doing. We have high expectations in the states. Higher than we do in Europe and Japan, and that's probably why the heat has been on Sanctuary more than the other labels.

What's the most definitive Anthrax album?
Probably "Among the Living". I think that's the record that everybody just kind of looks at as the one turning point. Since I've joined the band, it would probably be "Sound of White Noise" because that was the first record with me in it. And that seems to be one that everybody kind of felt that closeness as well. But it's up the rest of the band to make the decision on that.

You are just about to record a video for "What Doesn't Die" the opening track off of your latest album "We've Come For You All". I've heard is going to be "The most kick-ass, zombie-filled video of all time."
That's our objective. I hope we make it happen.

You looking to knock "Thriller" off that throne? You feel the time is right to mess with Mr. Jackson?
I'm really hoping that it's just gonna be intense. With zombies, I love the campiness of certain things associated with zombies. But I don't think that we are going for that. I want it to be really intense. I hope that's what happens with it. At the end of the day we are going to put it in the hands of the director. But he's a friend of ours, Brian Posehn, who is an actor and writer. He's been on Mr. Show and Just Shoot Me. He's a total die-hard metalhead and he's gonna do a great job.

Give me 20 years worth of wisdom in one sentence.
Just be true to yourself. I know that sounds like a cliché. But it means the most. It really does. All the other shit, is fluff.

[We like to list discographies when we can, but these guys have well over a dozen releases so best to just check their website and fill in the holes in your Anthrax listening history.]

www.anthraxtheband.com

GOATWHORE *Funeral Dirge for the Rotting Sun*

With its Rotten Records debut, *The Eclipse of the Ages Into Black*, Louisiana miscreants Goatwhore explored old school satanic black metal as no American act had before. Goatwhore's new second effort, *Funeral Dirge for the Rotting Sun*, ventures into darker, less conventional territory. Probing the pitch-black recesses of mind and soul in a disturbing, introspective examination of dark forces at work, and unleashing it all with a feral hookiness and atmospheric flare, the band steps beyond the bounds of mere black metal into a realm all its own.

CD-3017-2

rottenrecords.com

VAMPIRE MOOOSE *Debut/Self Titled*

St. Louis extremists *Vampire Mooose* are anything but your average metal beast. Fusing death metal brutality and raw hardcore intensity with abstract, progressive arrangements and free-jazz freakouts, the band is unorthodox, unrelenting and utterly unpredictable. Their Rotten Records debut is an insane cross-breeding of Meshuggah, Dillinger Escape Plan and Obituary-style sonic terror tactics – only weirder and more vicious. They call it "rawkus," and it will rock your world.

CD-3018-2

GOATWHORE

Howard Hello
Don't Drink His Blood CD
TRR62

Explosions In The Sky
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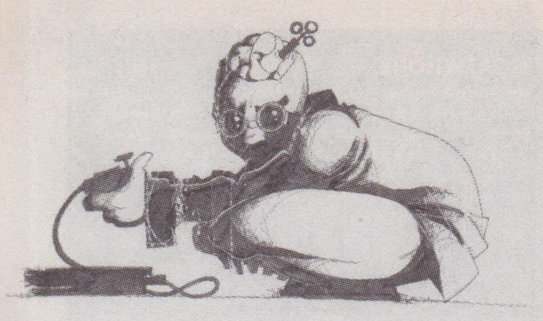

VIDEO GAME NEWS

By Ryan Thomas

Area 51

Gangland

Remember how sweet **Goldeneye** was on the N64? Well EA announced they are going to release a sequel to that game with a nice little twist. This time around you can play as the bad guy. You could play as Pussy Galore too, although it has nothing to do with video games. Development of the game is already under way at EA's Los Angeles studio, and the game is due on multiple platforms this fall. The classic hack-and-slash series **Gauntlet** is getting another installment. The game would be the first since 2002's Gauntlet Dark Legacy, which was a bit lackluster. True to the series, you'll battle your way through dungeons fighting various monsters and stealing treasures... kind of like LA. Midway will develop a third game in its MLB SlugFest series, titled **MLB SlugFest: Loaded**. The game, which will hit store shelves this June, will be playable online, however, the PlayStation 2 version of the game will support online play only over broadband. Sorry all you poor kids with mere 56K dial ups, but rich people are just more deserving than you. Sammy Sosa has signed on as cover mode, beating out Heidi Klum. **Area 51** is on the way! Midway will publish the game, which is being developed by Inevitable Entertainment. Originally released as a light-gun game in arcades, the new version will be a first-person shooter. Players will take on the role of Ethan Cole, a HAZMAT specialist leading a small unit into the Groom Lake Research Facility, where a virus has turned everyone into aliens. Hey, how come my viruses only give me itchy red rashes around my nobber? Critical Mass Interactive will create a first-person shooter inspired by the **Sword of Dracula** Comics series. (I heard there's movie in the works too). In the Sword of Dracula, the fanged fiend is a badass terrorist with a vampire army at his disposal. There's not a whole lot of midday battles I'm assuming. **Athens 2004** has been announced for the PS2. Its the official video game of this year's Olympic Games which takes place in...go on guess...yes, Athens! Athens 2004 will feature seven Olympic venues, including the Olympic Stadium for Athletics, the Markopoulo Olympic Shooting Centre, the Olympic Aquatic Centre, the Nikaia Olympic Weightlifting Hall, the Olympic Indoor Hall for Gymnastics, the Markopoulo Olympic Equestrian Centre, and the historic Panathinaiko Stadium for Archery. All of the venues in the game have been painstakingly re-created using architectural plans and photographs. Which is good because we all know exactly what they look like and would be pissed otherwise. Xbox Live users who complete **Ninja Gaiden** will be eligible to register for the worldwide online championship that will kick off at this year's E3 in May. Competitors will first fight other players in their areas, and rankings will be posted on an Xbox Live leaderboard. Winners move on to the Finals in September at X04 in Europe. Pandemic Studios confirmed they hard at work on a new Xbox title to be published by LucasArts. **Mercenaries** will be a third-person shooter with an anarchic but military storyline involving a civil war in Asia. Finish him! That's right, Midway announced **Mortal Kombat: Deception** for the PlayStation 2 and Xbox. The game will be "shocking and evil" and will rework the fighting franchise "with a host of new features, including multiple fatalities per character, multi-tiered interactive backgrounds, and extensive new game modes," said Midway. As long as I can pull some dude's spine out I'm cool with it. In related news, midway has pulled the plug on **The Justice League** after just seven months of development. it was set to feature many classic DC Comics characters, including Batman, Superman, The Flash, Wonder Woman, Green Lantern, Hawkgirl, and Martian Manhunter. The Wonder Twins apparently got the shaft. However, Cartoon Network partons will reap the rewards of **Samurai Jack: The Shadow of Aku,** which loosely follows the series and is your typical "good versus evil" plot. The game takes place across 24 levels that make up four distinct areas. These levels are filled with a pretty even balance of combat, platforming, and light puzzle-solving. It's set for release on 3/23. **Gangland,** Whiptail Interactive's Mafia sim game, is on its way to the factory. Developed by Media Mobsters, the game features real-time strategy and role-playing elements as well as extortion, racketeering, bribery, stealing, killing, bootlegging, seduction, prostitution, assassination, drive-by shootings, demolition, and rearing your own Mafia family. Gangland will ship on March 5. Let's be honest, the Matrix sequels suck dirt. A few weeks after canceling the online component of Uru: Ages Beyond Myst, Ubisoft has removed another massively multiplayer game from its lineup, **The Matrix Online**. They claimed their reason for bowing out was due to the poor reception of the sequels. Duh! Who wants to see Keanu's ass digitized? The Sony portable device, the PSP, is being pushed back to 2005, allowing the N-Gage and Nintendo's DS to basically run amok and scare the elderly. No word yet on all the features it will come with. OKay, somebody cue the damn trumpets. The long, long-awaited sequel to Counter-Strike, **Counter Strike: Condition Zero** will ship to stores on March 23. Retailers, start your presales. Expect to not see the 15-30 male demographic for at least 6 months after the release. They've only been waiting 4 frikking years. **Jak and Daxter** and **Ratchet & Clank** sequels will hit shelves in fall of 2004 Combined, Jak and Daxter and it's sequel have sold 1 million copies worldwide. Ratchet & Clank: Going Commando, and the original Ratchet & Clank have also moved a million-plus units. If that was cocaine they'd be living Tony Montana style: Say hello to my little furry friend. Electronic Arts will publish **Samurai Warriors.** Set in feudal Japan, the game will let players assume the role of several different legendary warriors, including the ninja Hanzo Hattori and the samurai Sanada Yukimura. Players will have a number of traditional Japanese weapons at their disposal, like Yo Yo Ma. Just kidding (No i'm not), in this hack-and-slash game, players will wield katana swords, shurikens, staffs, and very sharp chopsticks. Samurai Warriors is scheduled to be released this May.

Samurai Jack

A BILLY CLUB IS WHAT YOUR CATCHIN!

Billy Club Sandwich

"CHIN MUSIC"

New York hardcore heavyweights return with their highly anticipated full length "Chin Music." Ten tracks of pissed hardcore by one of the best bands from the NYHC scene. Destined to be the best hardcore album of the year. For fans of Blood for Blood, Terror, and Madball. Also available Billy Club Sandwich "Superheroes at Leisure"

Brutal and dark this is the best release this year of the extreme style hardcore/metalcore world.-Shatteredsilence

My Bitter End

...a savage, yet constructive release with a lot of negative energy. Groups like Shadows Fall and Bleeding Through may sound more refined and may have slicker melodic guitar hooks, but they sure don't have the foamy rabid smile and bite MBE displays on this disc.-Deadtide this album rules. They are a metalcore band, yes, but they incorporate such a wide range of influences.that it is never dull.-AMP

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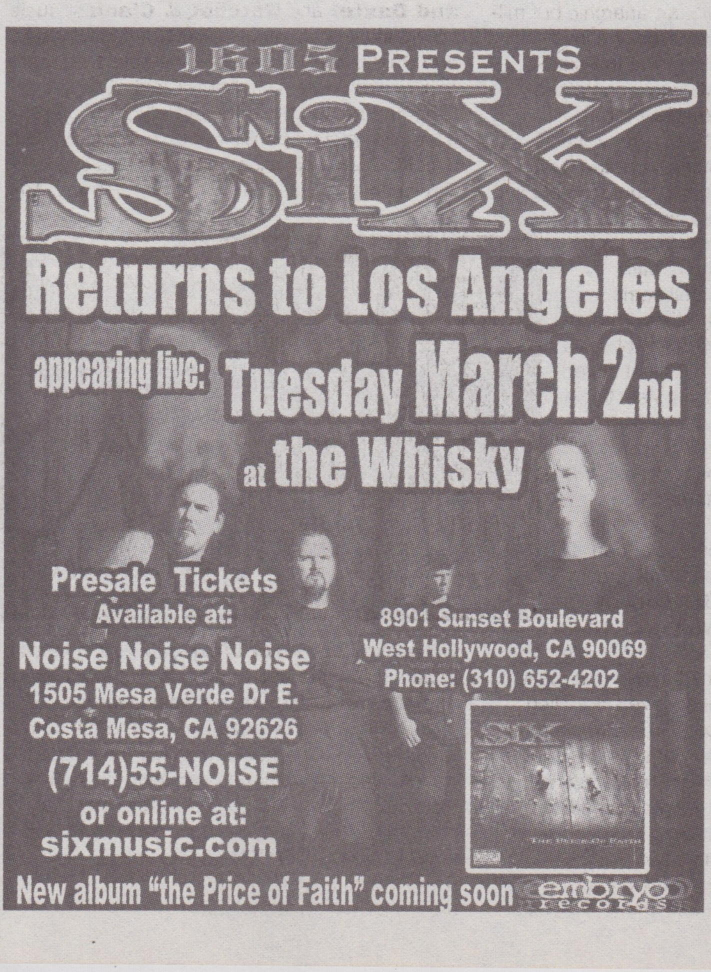
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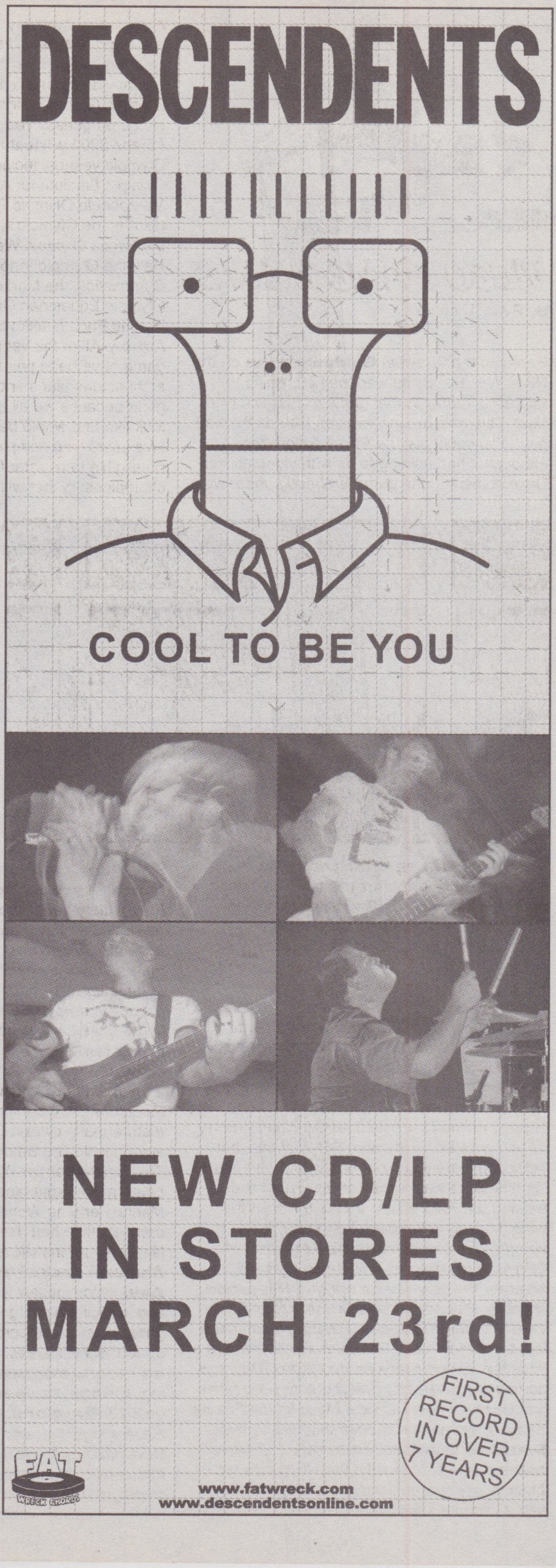
New album "the Price of Faith" coming soon embryo records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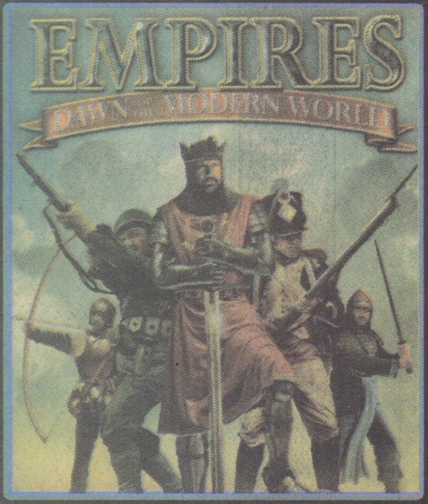
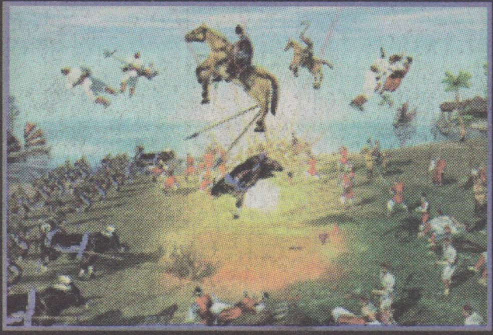
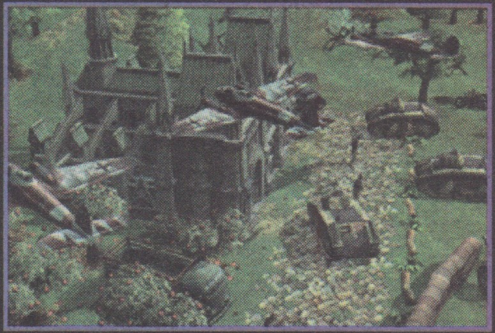
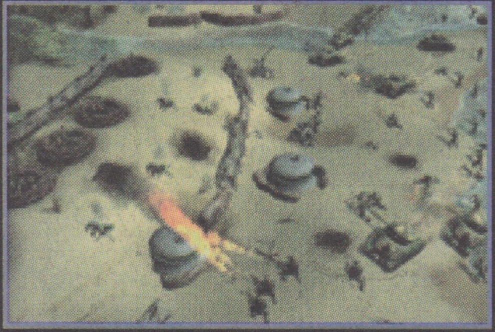
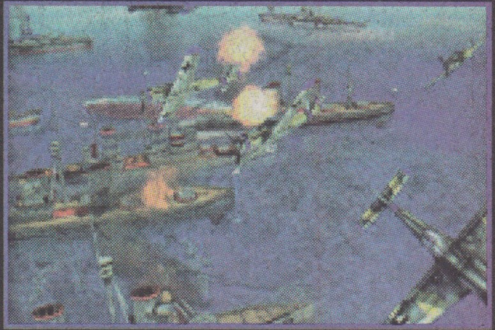

EMPIRES
DAWN OF THE MODERN WORLD

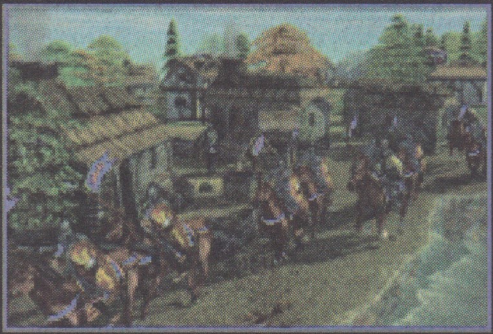
Developer: **Stainless Steel Studios**
Publisher: **Activision**
Platform: **PC**
Players: **Single / Online Muliplayer**
Website: www.empiresrts.com
Player: **Davros**

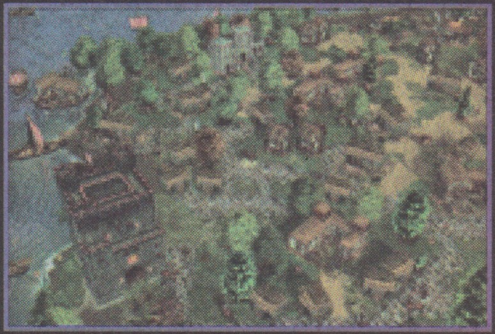


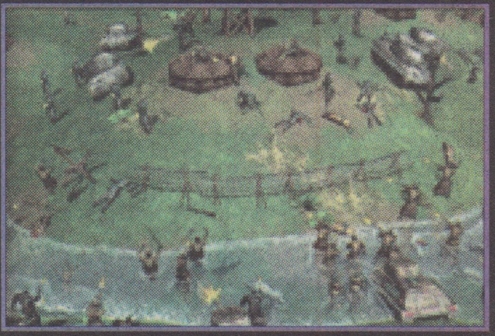












A new school RTS (Real Time Strategy) that plays off the familiar game play, but with enough original concept to entertain both newcomers and seasoned vets of the genre. For those who haven't played one of the many titles that utilize this RTS concept as the core of the game, (Warcraft and the Command and Conquer series being two of the more well known), it's essentially a lot of micro-management of resources combined with some strategic warfare logistics. Games start with a few "peasants" you assign to gather resources (stone, wood, gold, food) and do other essential tasks (constructing the building that produce your various armada of weaponry, soldiers and upgrades). It's through efficient management of these resources and crucial decisions on what to build and when that give the advantage of "who can raise the biggest army the fastest". Obviously, total obliteration of your enemy is the goal.

Empires: Dawn of the Modern World plays off this concept well. Variety is what keeps this games replay value high. There are seven distinct civilizations, all with unique weaponry and soldiers. And each civilization can "upgrade" to a new age, a total of five, again, each with unique weaponry and soldiers. Spanning a "1000 years of History", as the box likes to point out, takes you through Medieval, Gunpowder, Imperial, WWI and WWII time frames. The advancements are made through the aforementioned resource management. So you can see the distinct advantage for one to be able to arrive at the gunpowder age before your opponent. There is nothing like mowing down a couple dozen archers with four guys on horseback with guns. And let's not even talk about what happens when someone gets bombers in the air first.

Among the more fun weapons: Catapults that toss diseased cows. War Kites that shoot arrows, Oil Smithy who dumps hot oil on clustered groups of enemies, Fire Gallery (small boats that shoot streams of fire) and the B-29 Superfortress (the best known B-29 being the Enola Gay which dropped a bomb on a city called Hiroshima). So yeah, you get an atomic weapon if you play the game right.

To add even more spice to the game play, troop, facility and weapon upgrades can also be researched to give the player an array of offensive and defensive executables. Many are unique to whichever of the seven civilizations you started with.

Graphically the game is stunning for the genre. Although, often, the game play revolves around managing hordes of things at once, so an overhead view is primarily used. Which makes the built in "record game" feature fun to go back and do more cinematic views of the skirmishes and really experience the thought put into the details. Actual game play trailers can be found on the games website to illustrate this.

Empires comes packaged with a few modes of game play. 3 storyline driven adventures (which where a bit hard to figure out what one is supposed to be doing at times), run the player through some historically significant turmoils. Name dropping real life locations and historical figures add a sense of legitimacy to the adventure. You can also play against the computer (with a difficultly setting to match your skill). And a multiplayer option is available. I had no trouble finding some matches online (although I got my ass handed to me repeatedly until I played the computer a bunch).

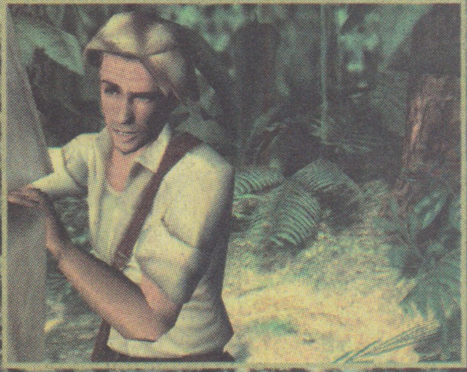
A great afterthought is the statistical display that follows any game. It shows a charted graph of you and your opponent(s) advancement over time and as well as citizen populations, army sizes, etc. Even total number of mouse clicks. It's interesting to see the graph spike and fall signifying when the battles took place and massive losses occurred (and significant rebuilding up for the next assault).

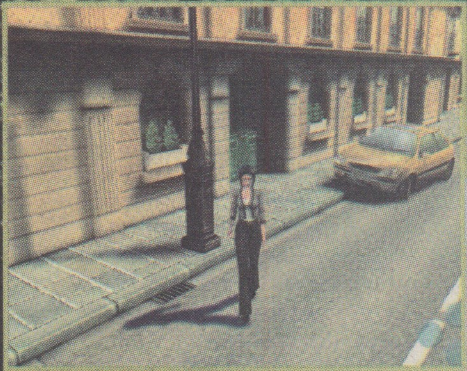
Games can easily run into the hours, so this is for the hardcore strategist that is in for the long battle. Generally, size equals domination but as the games subtleties appear with repeated play, a variety of different strategies can be employed. Hours, nay, days (weeks) of repeated game play with a good dose of variety and few unique spins make this newest installment to the RTS genre an easy winner.

BROKEN SWORD: THE SLEEPING DRAGON

Publisher: Adventure Company
# of Players: 1
Platform: PC (also on Xbox)
Developer: Revolution
Player: R. Thomas
www.brokenswordgame.com

3rd person point and click adventure games are an acquired taste, I'll admit. There are only a few good ones on the market, but none that really stand out as fantastic. Broken Sword takes a somewhat fresh approach, thought it too, seems to fall apart in areas. Stylistically speaking, it's great. It looks and feels like an animated film, with sharp,highly detailed qualities to both characters and environments. The opening plane crash scene, which is sort of like an animated Indiana Jones sequence complete with John Williams-esque music, lets you know straight out the game is going to rely on cinematic storytelling methods. The user interface is very friendly, and since it's dependent on proximity, it allows for a whole load of different actions. For example, stand next to a box and you'll be given the option to climb on it, move it, or inspect it. Should there be an item on it to take, a take icon will appear. Stand next to a ledge and various climb functions will appear. All interactive items are highlighted by a small sparkle effect, usually several per room which you can cycle through using the page up/down buttons. Additionally, you needn't worry about lining up jumps and falls, the game handles accuracy for you. The freshest idea in the game is a function that attempts to spice up fight sequences. When you're in a situation that calls for quick thinking--dodging a speeding car, ducking a bullet--the game will briefly highlight an action icon. But here's problem one. Generally, the keyboard doesn't respond quickly enough, and you're forced to replay the entire sequence over until you get it right, which means listening to the same bunch of dialogue again and again with no way to skip over it. Sometimes, on the retake, I knew the action was coming and hit the button right on time, and still the command didn't register. Frustrating. Problem number two, definitely the biggest prob, is the directional key mess. Because the camera angle shifts, running left becomes running right as you turn a corner, and hitting the opposite arrow key doesn't necessarily rectify the problem. It all depends on the new camera angle, which means you may even have to toggle between multiple arrow keys if you need to move diagonally. On the flip side, Revolution decided to camp up the dramatis personae with over the top character stereotypes, like the drunk Australian pilot, so you're eager to get to the next clue.The look is nice, the puzzles are adequate, and the mystery is fun. If you're a point and clicker, and don't mind running into some walls, this is definitely worth the price of admission.

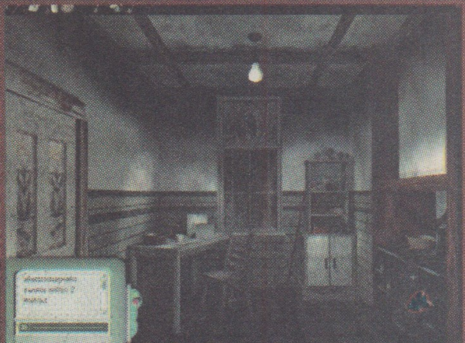


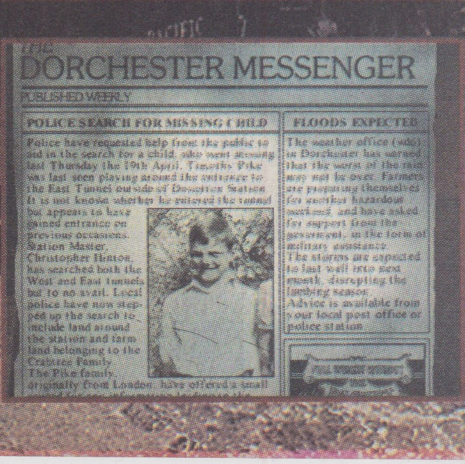


DARKFALL: THE JOURNAL

Publisher: Adventure Games
Developer: XXV Productions
# of Players: 1 Player: Fuego
Platform: PC
www.adventurecompanygames.com

I wanted to like this game, and I really tried. The idea of unraveling a mystery in a town full of ghosts seemed a winner, but sadly Darkfall is too slow, too monotonous, and too stagnant. The story revolves around mysterious disappearances in the town of Dowerton, where your brother has been surveying a train station. His grisly phone message prompts you to check things out, and when you arrive you discover the only living people left in town are some ghost hunters, and that your brother is nowhere to be found. Most of the game is spent in one location, a seedy hotel, simply going from room to room collecting pages from journals. At times it felt like i spent more time reading than actually playing. The user interface is the normal point and click with a First Person view. Actions are dependent on your moves, such as a magnifying glass appearing near clues.The puzzles are chin scratchers for sure, but they weren't breaking any new ground. And quite frankly, they seemed to yield little profit for solving them. The best thing about Darkfall is it's look and it's aural goodies. The shadows, the dark corridors, the eerie moans and ghostly voices that call out to you send chills down your spine. Probably three years ago this would have been a good game, because the idea is certainly there. However, the execution, no pun intended, is old hat. It's worth checking out for the frightful ambiance, just don't expect to jump out of your chair.





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PUBLISHED WEEKLY

POLICE SEARCH FOR MISSING CHILD

Police have requested help from the public to aid in the search for a child, who went missing last Thursday the 19th April. Timothy Pike was last seen playing around the entrance to the East Tunnel outside of Dowerton Station. It is not known whether he entered the tunnel but appears to have gained entrance on previous occasions. Station Master, Christopher Hinton, has searched both the West and East tunnels but to no avail. Local police have now stepped up the search to include land around the station and farm land belonging to the Crabtree Family. The Pike family, originally from London, have offered a small

FLOODS EXPECTED

The weather office (sdo) in Dorchester has warned that the worst of the rain may not be over. Farmers are preparing themselves for another hazardous weekend, and have asked for support from the government, in the form of military assistance. The storms are expected to last well into next month, disrupting the lambing season. Advice is available from your local post office or police station.

ULTIMATE BEACH SOCCER

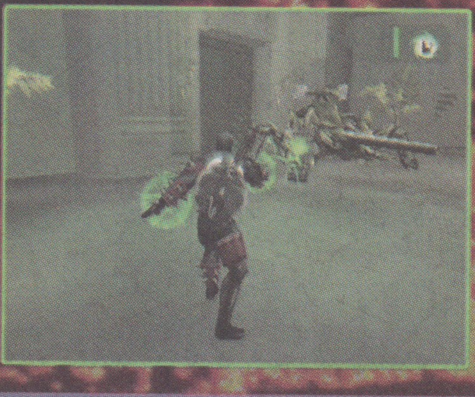
Platform: XBox
Developer: Power and Magic Development
Publisher: Dream Catcher Interactive
Players: 1-4
Website: www.dreamcatchergames.com
Player: Peter Soyer

The box promises "Beach. Ball. Babes." It provides the beach, almost the balls and not the babes. The beaches look great, even though the players are in a stadium and not truly on a beach with the wind in their hair and the ocean spray on their face. But I can't have everything. The ball handling looks really good and the special kicks make for some nice eye candy, but organizing all the combos together is as easy as sitting through the Grammy's. The babes come in during halftime and do a terribly glitchy computer dance to a DJ in the stands doing the same dance. If badly animated girls in bathing suits are the new hot thing, prepare to stand in line for this treasure. The training, however, is harder than the game. There are no instructions, no "push this button to do this." It just says "put the ball here" or "kick here." What happened to trainings that actually train? This game won't be a huge seller, but it will find its niche. If the dos-animated girls don't hit their mark, the big market of beach soccer sport buffs will buy it. Hopefully the four copies at Best Buy won't sell out all at once.

SPAWN ARMAGEDDON

Spawn has had a rough life. He was killed by the government, reborn through a deal with Satan and is now in a constant struggle between staying on Earth or taking up his throne in Hell. He feels doomed either way, so he tries to be the nice guy and continually save the world from Hell's demons. He has been doing a good job for numerous years and continues his valiant fight in his latest video game, it's Namco that drops the ax of lost souls. This is a run-of-the-mill action game featuring Spawn instead of (insert action hero here) doing the ass kicking. He can float with his cape, slash with his ax and grapple with his chains, but nothing comes across as fresh. The best part of the game is the graphics. Spawn looks exactly like Spawn, berzerkers look exactly like berzerkers, imps look like imps and cut-in-half soldiers look like cut-in-half soldiers. The boss fights are one of the main drawbacks of the game. They are either extremely easy or insanely hard. There is no middle ground. The heavy metal soundtrack is a little much, but at least it covers up some of the cheesy sound effects. The voice acting is decent, but I never realized Spawn was such a talkative guy. All the demon spawns I know pretty much keep to themselves. Any fan of the Spawn legacy will be more than pleased with this game, but for those who are just looking for an action game to fill some hours there are better ones out there.

Platform: XBox
Developer: Namco
Publisher: Namco
Players: 1
Website: www.namco.com
Player: Peter Soyer



TIME CRISIS 3

Platform: PS2
Developer: Namco
Publisher: Namco
Players: 1-2
Website: www.namco.com
Player: Brian Greenaway

Time Crisis 3 is straight from the movie theater lobby to your living room, ready for you and your friend (provided you both have vision good enough to discern the action on the ludicrously small split-screen) to save the world. Ducking-and-attacking is where Time Crisis separates itself from the mountain of pretenders, as you'll be able to fire at will with the Guncom (almost as cool as the NES Zapper) and duck by putting the standard PS2 controller at your feet and smashing down on it. Add in a sniper mode and some of the worst acting ever and you've got yourself a winner

San Diego Punk compilation...

A LITTLE PUNK, SLIGHTLY DRUNK

SAN DIEGO 2001

Featuring:

The Shitgiveits

TILTWHEEL

SKIPJACK

THE YUCKS

YER MOM

Furious IV

5 ★ DEGENERATE

THE DOWNTOWN STRUTTERS

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YER MOM

5 Star Degenerate

The Yucks

Uncalledfor

Spotless DIGITAL PRODUCTIONS

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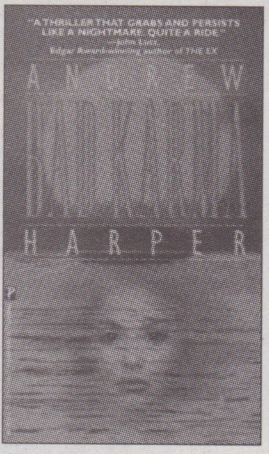
Read more.

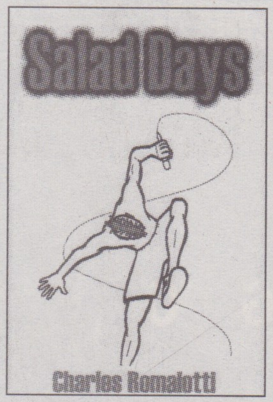
Andrew Harper
"Bad Karma"
(Pinnacle Books)


"A THRILLER THAT GRABS AND PERSISTS LIKE A NIGHTMARE. QUITE A RIDE."
—John Lutz,
Edgar Award-winning author of THE EX
ANDREW
BAD KARMA
HARPER

For a page-turning, suspense filled summer thriller try "Bad Karma." Psych Tech Trey Campbell is on a much needed vacation from the Darden State Mental Hospital for the Criminally Insane. Unfortunately, he's the only person in 10 yrs. to at least semi-calm the most dangerous patient within it's walls, Agnes Hatcher, a serial killer who puts Bundy and Dahmer to shame and is nicknamed "the Gorgon" and "the surgeon." While Trey and his family enjoy Catalina Island, Agnes escapes, hot on the trail of the man she believes is her re-incarnated true love - Trey. In the process she leaves a wake of dead bodies that includes anyone who gets in her way and when she finds out he has his own family her rage against him and them can't be quenched. Things get even more interesting when you figure out who the supposedly re-incarnated lover actually is and Trey better figure it out fast if he wants to save his family and himself. A worthy effort for a first novel.

Mary Ellen

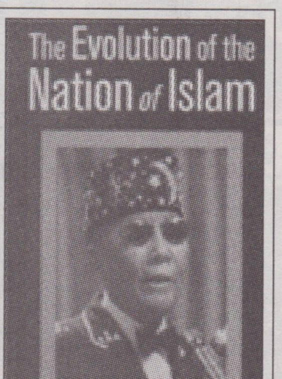
Charles Romalotti
"Salad Days"
(Layman Books)



Salad Days is a raw, brutally down-to-earth portrayal of emerging punk and hardcore scenes back in the 80's. Although Romalotti is pretentious in his assumption that the scene is all there is to life, the idea that music shapes individuality provides universal appeal. Authentic details from the time period and the mention of well known artists including Black Flag and The Descendents makes it's tough to distinguish between fact and fiction in this very realistic story. Frank Smith, the main character, comes off as an insightful and authentic protagonist with real substance behind his beliefs. The following passage captures the true meat of his values. "It was the real thing. The more underground music I bought, the more I became hooked. I'm not sure if it shows, but I have a lot of self-respect. I get that from the music. The music means everything to me. Without it, I'd be lost." Every move he makes and every step he takes is dictated by Frank's inner passion: music. Along with cohorts and fellow band members The Fluorescent Condoms, Frank prove that despite green-dreaded Mohawks and non-conventional behavior, inspiration can come from the most unlikely sources.

Melanie

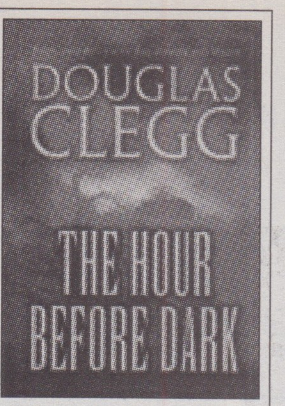
Jesus Muhammad-Ali
"The Evolution of the Nation of Islam"
(JMA Publishing)



Jesus Muhammad-Ali is the grandson of Elijah Muhammad, leader of the Nation of Islam from 1934 to 1975. As a Nation of Islam insider, Muhammad-Ali is unique qualified to comment on the assassination of Malcolm X and the position of the Nation of Islam in a post-9/11 world. The author does all this as well as illuminating the story of the growth and development of the Nation of Islam organization. For the outsider, Muhammad-Ali's prose can be somewhat impenetrable and the preface warns, "The reader should be aware this book is presented in my voice and has not been grammatically embellished, for a number of heartfelt reasons." Note that the passive voice and run-on sentences are the least of the obstacles in the writing that lies between slang and Islamic ornamentation. Still, the story shines through illustrated by first-person anecdotes and numerous photographs. Reproductions of Jesus Muhammad-Ali's oil paintings show he has great talent in that area.
www.jmamasterprints.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

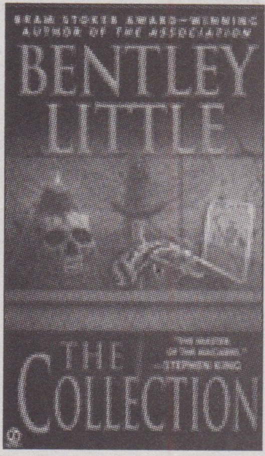
Douglas Clegg
"The Hour Before Dark"
(Leisure Books)



With this foray into the realm of psychological terror, Douglas Clegg takes his readers on a wild ride through buried secrets, brain-washing, mind control and a family besieged by madness. This novel is not for the faint of heart as the murder (butcher) of their father brings Nemo and Bruno Raglan back to Burnley Island to join their sister Brooke as they try to make sense of things that are beyond sense. And then there are the memories . . . The Dark Game they played as children that must NEVER continue past sunset - but wait, it did. The mother that left them behind when they were so young to be raised by their father - the father that sat with them on the hard-packed dirt of the smokehouse floor and taught them the Dark Game. The house with no halls, just doors from room to room to room - except there are passageways behind the rooms. As the story unfolds and each secret is revealed the suspense level builds until the very end of this book and you never know what hit you until it does!

Mary Ellen

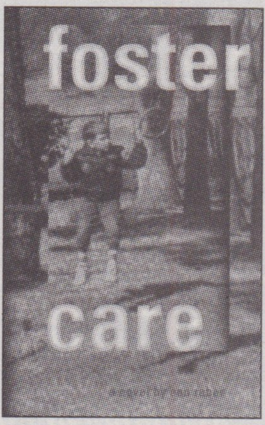
Bentley Little
"The Collection"
(Signet)


BRAM STOKER AWARD-WINNING AUTHOR OF THE ASSOCIATION
BENTLEY LITTLE
"THE MASTER OF THE MACABRE" —STEPHEN KING
THE COLLECTION

Bentley Little has built a reputation in the past few yrs. as one of the best of the next generation of horror authors. Stephen King calls him "The Master of the Macabre," and Little IS all he's cracked up to be. His book "The Collection" is actually a short story collection to rival one by King himself. From the weird but intriguing first story, through the over the top weird and extremely graphic rest of the book, each story goes places most people wouldn't think of in a million years - which is what makes his books and short stories so good. This book is most definitely not for the faint of heart or those who want everything to make sense. The stories do not have gore or violence just because, there is a reason for every word. Sometimes the message is about as clear as mud, but it's never dull. If you've never read Little before, this is a perfect place to start.

Mary Ellen

Ann Raber
"Foster Care"
(Post-Traumatic Press)



Guy Kordell isn't a bad guy. He doesn't hurt people. He doesn't rob, or steal, or lie. Okay, he lies to girlfriend now and again, but who doesn't? Guy Kordell also isn't a very good guy. He doesn't aspire to be anything more than a pizza deliveryman, he doesn't have any real friends, and even the aforementioned girlfriend spends most of her time on his periphery. Guy spends the majority of his time on the fringes of the punk scene, working odd hours in a club where acts like Screeching Weasel and The Queers occasionally make appearances, but even among these outcasts, Guy still isn't at home. Because, in many ways, Guy has no real home. Guy Kordell is the product of a detached father and a depressed mother, and left free to his own devises (his own devices involving large amounts of spray-cans and cigarette lighters), young Guy quickly finds himself in the foster care system, whisked away to a new and markedly different home with new and markedly different parents. Guy Kordell is also a product of talented debut novelist Ann Raber, who allows Guy's tale to present itself in a thoughtful, introspective manner, through the use of omnipresent flashbacks and glimpses into the fancifully dark corners of Guy's psyche. If where we currently are is a product of where we've come from, then it should come as no surprise that Guy seems to occupy so very little space in his current surroundings. It is the flashes back to Guy's childhood, told with a wide-eyed wonder and detachment that truly show just how jigsawed his life has become. Lest you think Raber is nothing more than a heartless cynic, willing to draw upon your emotions for her character's gain, rest assured that "Foster Care" offers tons of laughs, not all of them at Guy's expense. A quick read despite its length, "Foster Care" won't make Oprah's booklist (which is reason enough to buy it), but should definitely make yours.

Brian Greenaway

Top5's

5ugge5tion5 from the MF mu5ic 5taff.

Jaems Wright

Big B "High Class White Trash" (Suburban Noize)
- Sickest fucking hip hop record.
Col Chamber "Dark Days" (Roadrunner)
- Re-discovered one of the band's best.
Anti-Flag "The Terror State" (Fat Wreck)
- Great socialist punk rock record.
Various Artists "Singles Soundtrack" (Epic)
- When Seattle was still cool.
The Darkness "Permission to Land" (Atlantic)
- Can not stop the rock.

PR!

Helmet "1991-1997" (Interscope)
- Please please reunite and tour.
Aceyalone "Love and Hate" (Deconstruction)
- Aceyalone, RJD2 and El-P? Nice.
Unsane "Lambhouse" (Relapse)
- Reminds me of eatin' caramels!
Big Sty "Self-Titled" (unsigned)
- Funny today, dead the next.
Braid "Frame and Canvas" (Polyvinyl)
- Reunited! Helmet, you paying attention?

Anthony Happel

Another Blue Door "Haulers" (Stinky)
- Stunningly well-crafted smart rock.
Horse The Band "R.Borlax" (Pluto)
- New noise Gods have spoken.
Fireball Ministry "The Second Great Awakening" (Nuclear Blast)
- Wallowing in the glorious seventies.
Tiamat "Prey" (Century Media)
- Sisters of Mercy with bells.
In The Woods "Live At The Caledonien Hall" (The End)
- Two discs of prog delight.

Rebecca Martin

The Mars Volta "De-loused in the Comatorium" (Universal/GSL)
- I upgraded speakers for them.
GlassJaw "Worship and Tribute" (Warner Brothers)
- I used to HATE this.
Unicorns "Who will cut our hair when we die" (Alien8)
- But do they like girls?
Danger Mouse " Grey Album" (Unsigned)
- J-Z and Beatles suck alone.
Strokes "Room on Fire" (RCA)
- A younger hotter Neil Diamond.

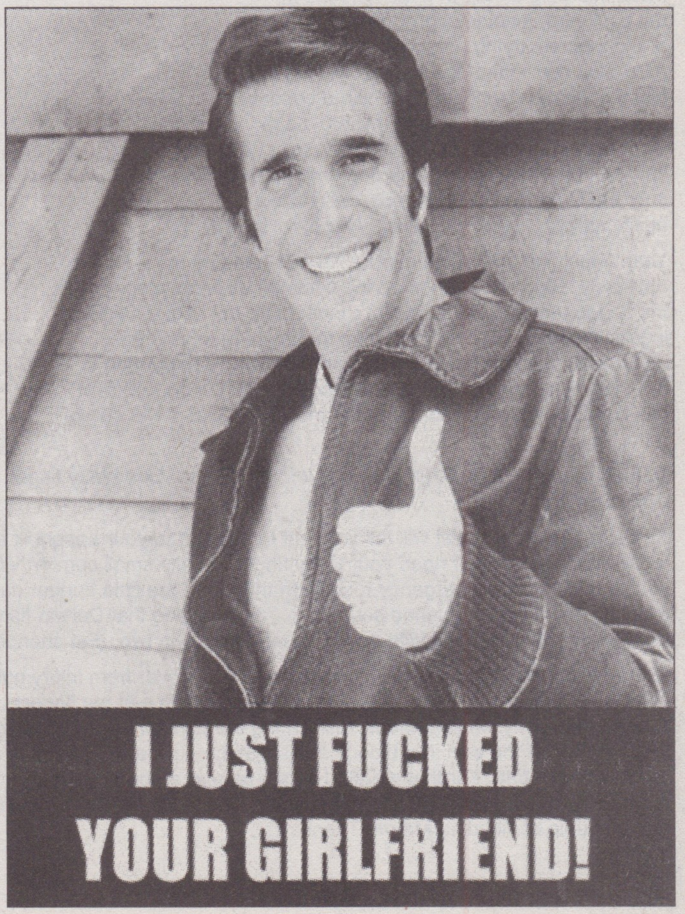
Pete Soyer

Yeah Yeah Yeahs "Fever to Tell" (Interscope)
- Art punks selling cheap sex.
Les Savy Fav "Emor EP" (Southern Records)
- A perfect portion of Fav.
Tears for Fears "Shout: The Very Best of Tears for Fears" (Universal)
- The best of the cryers.
Modest Mouse "Lonesome Crowded West" (Up.)
- Isaac, drop da new album!
The Clash "London Calling" (Sony)
- Music history in one album.

Bushman

Sweet "Fox On The Run" (mp3 single)
- Rollerskating flashbacks coming on strong.
Walls of Jericho "All Hail The Dead" (Trustkill)
- Thunderous crashing metal hardcore threat.
My Life With The Thrill Kill Kult "3 new Re-Issues" (Rykodisc)
- The Sexeteria is now open.
Probot "Self-Titled" (Southern Lord)
- Can Dave Grohl be cooler?
Fear Factory "Archtype" (Liquid 8)
- Burton Bell is back bitches.

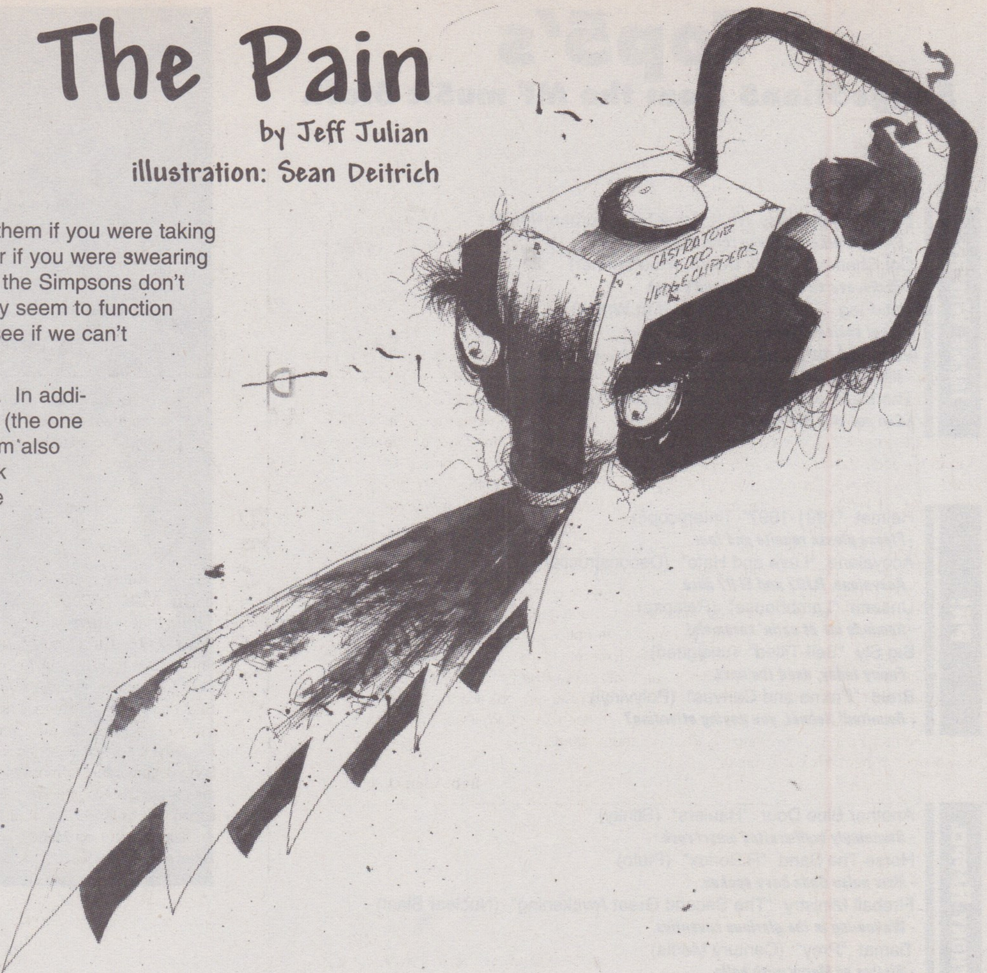
gizzards/D.P.I.
www.thegizzards.net
split 7"
coming soon



Pinky and The Pain

by Jeff Julian

illustration: Sean Deitrich



Do you need your pinkies? You might need them if you were taking afternoon tea with the queen in your knickers or if you were swearing some childhood secret on the playground. But the Simpsons don't have them and neither do the Muppets and they seem to function alright. Let's ponder this together friends and see if we can't come to a reasonable conclusion.

Hands and fingers are good. I need my hands. In addition to being a writer and a devout masturbater (the one skill that justifies my claims of ambidexterity), I'm also a guitar player. Without my fingers, my fretwork would be as fleet as the animatronic bear in the Chuck E. Cheese band. But what would happen if both pinkies suddenly disappeared...or just didn't work anymore?

It can happen. The stories you are about to read are true. The names have not been changed to protect the innocent because they happened to me and I haven't been innocent since that incident in the confessional in fourth grade.

I remember one thought I had very clearly before IT happened. I recall watching the little teeth of the hedge trimmers chew up the tangle of growth on my bushes and thinking: Damn, that would really fuckin' hurt if you were ever stupid enough to cut yourself with it.

I was standing on top of a stone ledge in my backyard, leaning over to reach the top of the bushes, trying not to pull the orange extension cord out of the socket, waving the electric trimmer back and forth like a conductor at a symphony. Humming to myself. La la la...trimming the hedges....buzz buzz buzz...sun is shining...buzz buzz buzz...my dog eating sticks like they are Rold Gold pretzel rods...buzz buzz buzz...shlippt....AAARGGGHH! AAAAAHHHHH!!

Yeah. Just like that. One minute I'm one-handing an obviously '10 and 2', hands on the wheel at all times electric hedge trimmer; the next, I'm running into my house holding my bleeding left hand grabbing for anything to stop the blood while my girlfriend tries to figure out what's happened to me. Hey, just another Sunday afternoon of yard work. Except this time I Edward Scissorhands-ed myself instead of the shrubbery.

Damage report? One large gouge in left ring finger. One pinky finger with its tip cut off.

And sure, an evolutionist will tell you that in addition to your appendix and tonsils, you really don't need your pinky finger. That's small comfort when you're sitting in the emergency room with the top of the little bugger dangling like the lid of an opened soup can. I'd like to see that Darwin fish walk off the back of a car with one of its legs ripped in two. Fat chance.

29 days. 696 hours of peace. That's all I got to recover from injury number one before a rock, hard football bounced off the tips of my fingers instead of into my waiting hands, dislocating the right pinky, and popping the bone out of the skin in a bloody mess. Some guys are regulars at a local tavern or bar. For that month, I was a regular at the emergency room. Hey there. Yeah, I'll have the usual. One severely fucked up finger and a couple of vicodin. Mmm! Thanks.

Damage report? Entire right hand bandaged up to the wrist, right pinky immobilized. And to top things off, like a big rotten maraschino cherry resting at the peak of a shit sundae, when I came home from the hospital I discovered that some miscreant had vandalized my car! I still wonder had I bent over that day in the parking lot, if a 747 would've flown right up my ass.

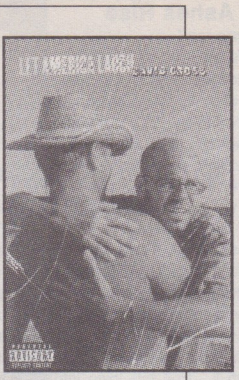
By accident and not evolution, I went from two healthy pinkies to a couple of severely bandaged phalanges that were useless at various times for the next few months. Was I able to survive? Sure. I couldn't type. I couldn't make hand turkeys. I couldn't make the devil/rock sign with either hand. And I couldn't play guitar very well. But I still hit the studio and played on an EP. I learned to shake left-handed. I could still flip the bird to any jackass that cut me off in traffic. Could you live without your pinkies? I still don't know. I'm just glad to have mine back even though I'm not allowed near power tools anymore unless I'm wearing oven mitts.

DVD REVIEWS

David Cross

"Let America Laugh"

(Sub Pop Records)



Alright, the idea is that it's a documentary with a behind the scenes view of life on the road with David Cross. For the most part the DVD is not standup, and it's not sketch comedy. David Cross toured the country in 2002 with the band "Ultrababyfat," during which the material for "Shut Up You Fucking Baby" was recorded from his stand up comedy routine. The tour was not a typical comedy tour, given the fact that he toured with a band and didn't play the typical comedy clubs, but small rock venues and bars. The DVD captures everything that went on during the tour that you didn't already get from the cd. This includes hilarious interactions and encounters with hecklers, interviewers, fans, club owners, and drunks. Director, Lance Bangs (who if you were paying ahy attention, has done documentaries, music videos, and various other collaborations with the likes of Pavement, The Shins, Moby, Green Day, Spike Jones, Sonic Youth... not to mention is married to Corin Tucker of Sleater Kinney), captured everthing from backstage, on the stage, on the road in the van, post show partying, and more. As any fan knows, the comedy of David Cross oozes cynicism and sarcasm. However, one of the things the Dvd really showcases is David's great ability to think on his feet and still be incredibly funny. He effortlessly makes people look foolish with his quick wit and realistic sense of irony. You also get a sense of how he develops his material, and his ability to improvise and write relevant and funny material about recent events. His dealings with some of these people provide some insight as to why many may have lost faith in the American people in general. If anybody happened to have gotten a hold of Modern Fix issue #31 from way back last May, you may have noticed an interview done by (drunk at the time) Gordon Downs of David Cross. Excerpts of the very interview that Modern Fix ran actually appear on the Dvd... and with some adept editing, they do a good job of making Modern Fix's very own "Senator Drinks-a-lot" look like a jackass. The always hilarious Bob Odenkirk makes an appearance as well. Well worth viewing as long as you're not expecting Mr. Show, or more stand up.

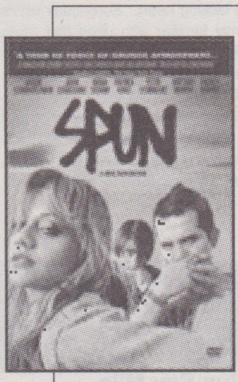
www.subpop.com/bands/david_cross

Sebastian U.

"Spun"

Directed by Jonas Akerlund

(Silver Nitrate)



If you're lucky enough to have never tried TwEeK, "Spun" is the best preventative medicine out there. Complete with an all-star cast that includes Mena Suvari, John Leguizamo and Brittany Murphy, "Spun" depicts the worst-case scenario of Crystal Methamphetamine users (AKA Tweekers). Who would've thought that "Requiem for a Dream," the chronicle portraying the downward spiral of heroine addicts, could be outdone? Even more graphic and disturbing than "Requiem," "Spun" reveals the dirty world of addicts and their nasty habits. Whatever you want to call it: Speed, Crank, Tweek or Crystal, this white powder that can be smoked, injected or snorted sucks addicts into a world consumed with constant bouts of sleeplessness, constipation and extreme anxiety. Director Jonas Akerlund creates this drug-crazed masterpiece through fast motion cinematography, truly capturing the mind-set of these fucked-up individuals. Explicit in his expression, Ackerlund leaves nothing to the imagination (Don't rent this one at Blockbuster though, the rentals are censored!). Full of sex, drugs, lesbians, bondage, a green dog and police raids, "Spun" covers all the bases for those seeking a twisted thrill-ride into delirium.

www.spunthemovie.com

Melanie

Various Artists

"Offbeat"

(89MM)

Offbeat
minimum.movies

A co-operation between the Berlin music label E:Motion and the 89MM film collective brings you "'Offbeat: thirteen music minimum.movie". In an attempt to be recognized as short fills and not music videos the DVD features shorts by thirteen different artists plus bonus footage using formats ranging from mini dv, animation, 35mm etc. Some of the most notably were "Bravo! KTA 3000" a short animation by Lars Oeschler ,"Cul De Sac" a funny take on jock mentality in small town America, and "White Trucks" a look into perception. If you like short, German, art films this DVD is for you.

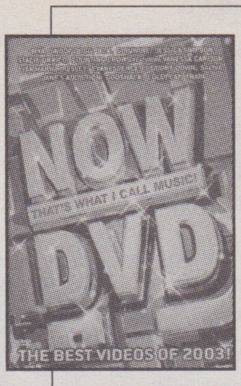
www.89mm.com/offbeat

Mike E.

Various Artists

"Now That's What I Call Music"

(Sony)



Video compilations are a good way to see some videos that you might not have seen otherwise. With MTV and Much Music playing less and less videos and more and more crap, DVD video compilations are even more important. Here we have a compilation of some of the more popular mainstream videos you may have only seen a few times. After you wade through the crap that the compilation cites as the best of 2003 like B2k, Jessica Simpson and Lisa Marie Presley, there are a couple cool rock videos. Saliva's 'Always' is a great song that has been playing in my CD player for quite a few months now. Godsmack turn in 'Straight Out of Line' and shows why these guys are one of hard rocks biggest names. There are also some other cool tracks like Coldplay with 'Clocks', Snoop D-O-G-G with 'Beautiful and 3 Doors Down and 'When I'm Gone'. Say whatever you want but there are a few good songs here, the only problem is you have to wade through 10 songs of crap to get to them.

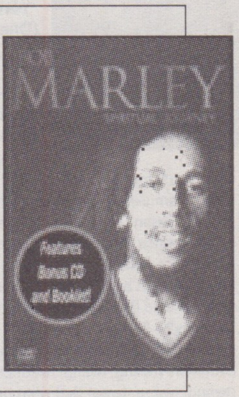
www.nowthatsmusic.com

James Wright

Bob Marley

"Spiritual Journey"

(Waterfall Entertainment)



This DVD is bundled with an audio CD of 14 tracks, including "Trenchtown Rock", "Lively Up Yourself", and "Soul Shakedown Party". There is also a glossy, 32-page booklet with full-color pictures and an overview of Marley's life and the band's career. Clocking in at just under an hour, the DVD documentary is mostly interviews with Ziggy Marley, the former Jamaican prime minister as well as friends and associates of Marley. A lot of attention is given the assassination attempt on Marley, his political side, his international success as well as anecdotes. It is interesting to hear the slightly different points of view on different facets of Marley's life.

www.musicvideodistributors.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

The Residents

"Eskimo"

(Euro Ralph)

The album Eskimo came out in 1979 and still resonates as a highpoint in impressionistic minimalism. Putting on the sparse, alien soundtrack can make a hot room feel chilly. This special DVD edition combines Inuit photographs and text to overlay images with a horrific, tragic, mysterious tale. The words and images are carried over onto a glossy, color 16-page booklet. The booklet includes pre-publicity articles about supposedly stolen masters. Chris Cutler (Henry Cow), responsible for much percussion on the album, wrote one of these articles. This DVD fully completes the suggestion of Eskimo musical documentary suggested with the icy album. Also, go to the "Residents" Main Menu option, which is a paragraph about the band. Let the DVD sit there for a few seconds and you get treated with a video and instrumental music from The Residents.

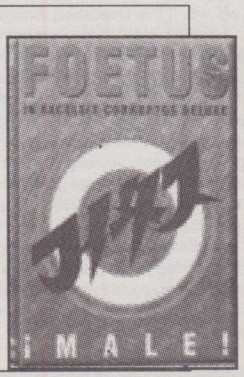
www.euroralph.de

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

Foetus

"¡Male!"

(Atavistic)



Foetus has a tradition of using single-syllable recording names, usually echoing the direct, brute force of the music: Blow, Nail, Gash. This one, with the double-emphatic Spanish exclaim suggests the pointless, sudden and brutal violence that is male. That is, violence of the wolf, of war and of such songs as "Anything (Viva)", the gay bashing "English Faggot" and the equal opportunity racial attack in "Free James Brown". The recordings are from several venues in the late '90s: CBGB's, Chicago's Cabaret Metro and more. The touring band of this time, captured here, includes members of Swans, Prong and Cop Shoot Cop.

www.foetus.org

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

From Ashes Rise

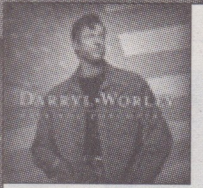
"Nightmares"

(JADE TREE)

So did I tell you I met a girl? Yeah, she's awesome. Totally hot, super funny, smart (okay, not brilliant), the whole package. Yes, Kelli Skye, I can hear you crying from there. The thing is though, she's in Thailand visiting some ex-boyfriend and I'm here listening to From Ashes Rise. Really, I think I got the better end of the deal. These guys rip. Hardcore the way it was meant to be played, full of searing passion and imagery without all of the macho bullshit that often goes along with it. Pop this thing into your player and be prepared for the stomach churning breakdowns within "The Final Goodbye" and the animalistic, dual guitar attack on "Reaction". Brad Boatright and John Wilkerson share vocal duties and both have two of the better screams around, along with the ability to avoid the tedious "hardcore growl" that only serves to mute the music. These guys are on tour with Strike Anywhere and Dillinger Four right now, so check them out. I wonder if they're playing Bangkok? Like that place is so cool. You can live there on ten dollars a day but who would want to? OK, I do. And I want to take "Nightmares" with me.

www.jadetree.com

Brian Greenaway



Darryl Worley

"Have You Forgotten?"

(DREAMWORKS)

Kill! Kill! USA! USA! Fuck the French! Fuck their heat wave! Ha! Ha! Ha! USA! USA! USA! Kill Iraqis! Make them pay! USA! Make them pay for what happened on that day! USA! USA! USA! Or have you forgotten? USA! USA! Okay, I'm over that. The title track is amusingly quaint and terribly dated. It's all about getting Bin Laden. Remember Bin Laden? He was that Bogeyman all of America was obsessed with getting after September 11th 2001? He was the one George W. Bush promised he'd personally go out and capture himself if need be, but shortly thereafter realized Bin Laden didn't control the world's third largest oil reserves? Do you remember? Yeah, well... That goddamn Osama Bin Laden (twang, twang, twee) He has never been caughten' (twang, twang, twee) Or have you gone and forgotten (twang, twang, twee) that what he did was really rotten (twang, tweeeeeee) to the poor old USA! Worley's lyrics are facile cash-ins designed to capitalize on the country music fans' grief and simplistic notions of revenge, liberty, freedom and justice. The music is vacuous, over-produced and uber-clean, holding none of the grit and passion of the genre. Worley sings as if the words his lyrics are composed of hold no meaning. He sounds cold and indifferent even as he's preaching about the just deserts the US should deliver upon those who spitefully smote her. Yup, he sure is inflamed about all the wrongs committed against his homeland, but comes off with a feeling as remote as a wealthy Indonesian tourist in a French brothel. To sum up Worley's record, allow let me say, "USA! USA! USA!"

www.darrylworley.com

DICK

Deadstring Brothers

"Self-Titled"

(TIMES BEACH)

Hey, damn.. .this one is awesome. There's bits of Neil Young and the Stones throughout this release and that's just fine by me and if you don't like it then I will drive to wherever you are and we will fight and I will win. The Deadstring Brothers began as a two-piece in Detroit but added a couple of hermanos along the way and now boasts a richly varied, bluesy sound consisting of a pedal steel and electric organ in addition to the standard goodies. There are plenty of rambling ballads and folksy cuts that will have you wishing you had a pickup and a dirt road to drive down, with a lovely little blonde thing waiting at the end for you and your flannel shirt. Yeah, you might expect something a little heavier out of the Motor City but the gentle picking and truck-stop blues will have you coming back time and again for another taste of Kurt Marschke's syrupy tenor and the serenading sweetness of Peter Ballard's pedal steel. This gem's eleven tracks will leave you wishing you had eleven more. And that truck. And the dirt road. Sure, you'd rather have John Tesh than the little blonde thing, but that's your deal, not mine.

www.timesbeachrecords.com

Brian Greenaway

Adiar

"The Permanent Bruise"

(CRITERION)

You really want to say that every band has something new and exciting to offer except for the fact that they seem to like making music or that they seem like nice people. The fact is that this hard rock outfit is completely forgettable. The only track worth a damn is "Inflamed Nerve Endings" which could have easily been on an early Incubus album with the right production. I think Adiar sound a little like 50 different bands, but not unique. Even the excessive screaming almost caused my heart to stop beating from sheer boredom. Sadly, I think this band is the elevator music of the future. I mean sure the screaming is a little much, but at least the singer's voice has been compressed so much that it always sounds on key and the guitar riffs are Wayne's World power chords.

www.adiarmusic.com

Tom

Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea

"North and South of Nothing"

(ACTION DRIVER)

You know what, people? I'm a very busy man. I don't have time for you or your concept albums. I mean, I get up, I go to work, I come home, I get something to eat, call up a few buddies, maybe watch a little TV, go to bed and that's about it. Where am I finding the time to listen to your little sixty-five minute, wandering, warbling, homage to whateveritis? "North and South of Nothing" is supposed to be a six-part tragedy but I think the tragedy is the lost hour of my life. The first two tracks both clock in around ten minutes and supposedly set the tone for the story to come, but I think we'd benefit from a little more action early on, seeing as how those twenty minutes pass at a pace that makes "Slingblade" look like "Die Hard". Finally, by the time we get to 'The Journey and Ensettlement' there are some hardcore guitars and mottled screams that replace the mumbled lyrics and atmospheric whooshes that abided earlier. From there, the album goes south again (even though it was already South of nothing), delving into some of the more operatic hardcore you're likely to encounter, which is either a good thing or a bad thing but probably a bad thing. I haven't had time to make up my mind because, like I said, I'm a very busy man. Now if you'll excuse me, I have to take a shit.

www.betweenthedevil.com

Brian Greenaway

My Morning Jacket

"It Still Moves"

(ATO)

The Louisville, Kentucky band return with a decent follow-up to the near perfect album, "At Dawn". A bit more straightforward and lacking the psychedelic weirdness of their first two albums, "It Still Moves" continues their tradition of plaintive acoustic ballads ('Golden') and fervent guitar rock ('Masterplan'). It's their first album for a major label (Dave Matthew's label no less), but don't let this frighten you. MMJ are the shit and a right proper representation of classic rock done today. It helps that they weave dreamy pop melodies (insert Flaming Lips comparison here) among the dueling, marathon, Skynyrdesque guitar solos. Jim James's heavily reverbed vocals (insert Neil Young comparison here, I dare you to find a review or story on MMJ that doesn't make said comparison) remain as beautiful as ever. The main difference from past albums is an injection of Memphis soul from the legendary Willie Mitchell (who worked with Al Green, among countless others) who provides horn arrangements on a few songs, notably the upbeat "Dancefloors". Points awarded to MMJ for enlisting a piece of history for this album. www.mymorningjacket.com

Jeff Skruck

Best of Seven

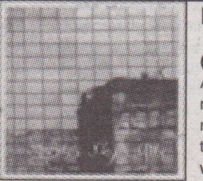
"Self-titled"

(FAST LANE)

There seems to be a never-ending supply of uninventive, boring pop bands that are trying to pass themselves off as hard rock. This band is one of those. The music isn't bad, just not very interesting. Every member of Best of Seven shows proficiency and talent, but the songs themselves are lacking heart. Somebody who's into discs that you are instantly familiar with upon first listen would really dig this one, but it just sounds like all the other "rock" bands that are swamping Clear Channel radio stations across the country. The label's website calls them a combination of Cheap Trick, Bon Jovi and Marvelous 3, and though I don't know if that's completely accurate, it's better than anything I can come up with. The bottom line is that it's a well-performed, well-recorded pop record from an unabashedly radio-friendly power-pop band.

www.fastlanerecords.com

Stacy Brandt



Blue Sky Mile

"Self-Titled"

(OHEV)

Aw, Seattle. I was there the other month and it's no wonder that so many good bands spring up from the dank ground there. I mean, what the hell else is there to do when it rains every damn day? You sit around with your buddies for long enough and you're like, "hey, wanna start a band?" and even though they don't really want to, it's not like they're out frolicking in the sun or anything, so they say "sure" and next thing you know you're in Blue Sky Mile and you sound like a mix between Texas is the Reason and Hot Rod Circuit, with lots of high end harmonies and a decidedly driving, pulsating guitar section. 'Ten Minutes' is probably the highlight of the seven tracks, with its incredible guitar work during the outro and displays some of the deeper elements at work within BSM. Not everything is poppy indie-punk served with a smile. "Last chance for a life," sings Jerry Kansky "Caught an open hand / Tried to stand up and fight / Tried to be a man." A subtle current of despair and fear cuts its way through the EP, casting a faint shadow on the minor chords and melodies. And you like it. You like the way your band sounds. You like the rain and you like the way the wood in the garage smells. Who needs the sun and its distractions anyway? You've got a Blue Sky Mile in the garage and it sounds better than any sugary sweet pop.

www.blueskymile.com

Brian Greenaway

PRETTY GIRLS MAKE GRAVES
THE NEW ROMANCE

Pretty Grils Make Graves

"The New Romance"

(MATADOR)

With their second full length release, "The New Romance" Seattle, Washington's Pretty Girls Make Graves have not only made a serious impact on the world of independent rock, but within the world of quality music in general. With a collection of singles, one EP and an LP already under their belt, their latest release on Matador Records is destined to be yet another overlooked piece of amazing musicianship. "The New Romance" is twelve songs of tawdry punk rock with harmonies liken to that of experiencing a twisted slumber party on clean blotter. With frenetic guitars and bass/drum driven tunes; the magic of PGMG lies in the distinct vocal stylings of singer It's rare when you can listen to an album from start to finish without having to skip through some of the less savory tracks. Thankfully though, "The New Romance" isn't one of those albums. Each track on this record is worth listening to and is something that should be shared with others. And yes, though their name may be a rip-off from a Smith's song, their music is some of the most original stuff to be released in quite some time. If you've been holding you're breath for something new to save you - you may now exhale. "The New Romance" is that breath of fresh air many of us have been waiting for.

www.matadorrecords.com

Gordon Downs

Demilos

"Silverjets"

(SELF-RELEASED)

Soaring through the clouds, suspended by super powers and tights, Demilos flies. This trio has taken a torch from the Flaming Lips fire and is carrying it proudly. Deep drums that sound like they were recorded with a hand held recorder back up the spaced out guitar, bass and sound effects. If I could fly, Demilos is what I would listen to. Anyone with a fear of flying should invest in this EP (only four songs) and all your cares will be carried away for about 15 minutes. These guys are minimalists with a lot to say. Their website is quick and simple, their music is easy to digest but has enough under its surface to keep ears intrigued. "Useless Farm" sounds like Granddaddy revved up, which isn't very revved at all. The whiny keyboard and whistling that opens the track sets the song up perfectly. The layers blend together like smoke and air before fading out to a single acoustic guitar. It's like being surrounded and then everything vanishes. 'Steal the Night' is the most structured song on the album. Listening to Demilos makes me warm inside. If you were closer I'd give you a hug. I'd give anyone a hug and then take them flying. Thanks for the four songs Demilos, now where's the full-length?

www.demilos.com

Pete Soyer

Ambulance

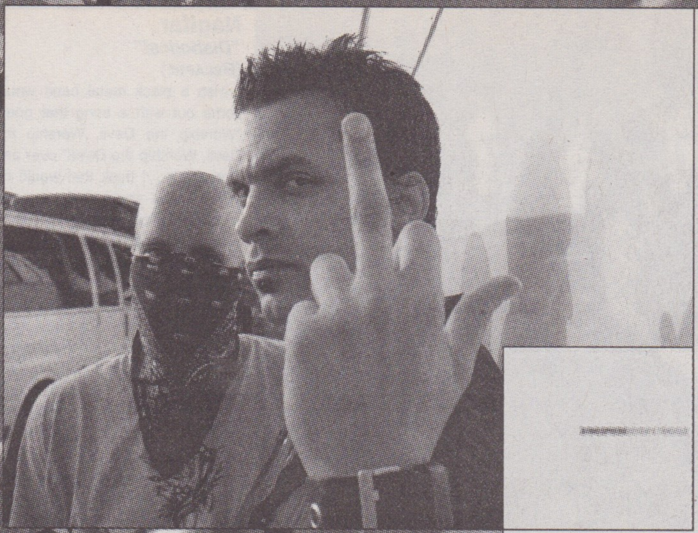
"Self-Titled"

(TVT RECORDS)

This 5 track EP is a smooth but rough on the edges showcase of melodic indie rock, pop punk, emocore, easy listening, college friendly, guitar driven tuneage that sits just right for pretty much anytime. Smatterings of the occasional piano, well recorded this and that and nicely mixed compositions that progress in all ways you are what you get here. That's a good thing. For some reason I couldn't help but think of indie films full of cute desirable women who are laughing.

www.ambulancenyc.com

Steve



Atmosphere

"7evens Travels"

(EPITAPH)

A new label. A new sound. Atmosphere signed to Epitaph to reach out to their supposed core audience and made probably the biggest mistake they could have made. People admire groups when they can change their sound and still put out quality music. Atmosphere tried to do that and failed with "7evens Travels". "God Loves Ugly" came extremely close to throwing Atmosphere into the mainstream mix. They were so close, Slug could probably smell the MTV Music Video awards catered food and contracts with Target. The organic piano sounds and precision bass lines present on the "Lucy Ford" EP are nowhere to be found with the new album. Slug (the only member of Atmosphere that most people know about) sounds like hes trying to be angry on some tracks and extremely happy on the next. I truly believe Slug does not know where he wants to go with "7evens Travels" and his lyrics do not have that sharpness and conviction that he had on the classic "Overcast" album. For true Atmosphere followers this is without a doubt a disappointment. Ant and Mr. Dibbs layed down some flat out ridiculously poppy beats that true fans would definitely not affiliate Atmosphere with. Maybe Slug is just fed up with people saying if Eminem wasnt around that he would be the man. Maybe its just a bad album and Atmosphere will regroup on the next one. Either way you put it "7evens Travels" is far from memorable. Only about three tracks are even worth listening to. It is a sad thing when you get to the last song on an album and remember the great sound a group used to have.

Hitboy

Fighting Jacks

"The Dying Art of Life"

(TOOTH & NAIL)

So I met this girl that's a dancer. That's like what she does. She's not a stripper or anything, she just goes out and dances like every night, like up in the cages and stuff and what the hell am I supposed to do with that? Yeah, I like hanging out with her but is there really a future there? Fighting Jacks is a lot the same. They've got some choruses that'll have you tapping your foot and some little riffs where you're like, "Alright, this is hot" but the rest of the song just sort of fades together and by the end of the track you're scratching your head and wondering if you should just stay home tonight. I need a little more honesty in my music, I guess. I need less hair rock and more thought. I need more than just a hook and a harmony. You'd think for a spiritual band like Fighting Jacks they'd be able to come up with a little more in the way of esoteric lyrics or something that would break away from the monotony found on "The Dying Art of Life". And just like countless dance clubs start to blend together, so to do a dozen tracks by Fighting Jacks, one full figured solo sloshing into the next with Casey Linstrum's surprisingly adept voice hovering incessantly about. "Farewell Senator" is a great track with its aggressive beat and acute focus. The rest seem to be a grainy facsimile.

www.fightingjacks.com

Brian Greenaway

Andrew W.K.

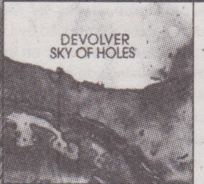
"The Wolf"

(ISLAND)

First things first, I was a big fan of what Andrew W.K. tried to do with his debut, "I Get Wet" and seeing him live was one of the best times I've had at a concert in years. So it was with a great deal of anticipation that I awaited the release of, "The Wolf". First off, the cover of this new disc is pretty lame: a picture of Andrew looking all contemplative. I've seen unsigned bands that put 10 times more effort into their CD's packaging. Anyways it's the music that counts right? Wrong. I don't know what happened between the first album and this one. There was this fun, fist pumping quality that just grabbed me by the throat on the debut that's just not here. Sure, all the staples of Andrew's sound are present like the keyboards, party lyrics and hard hitting drums, but something is still missing. Songs like 'Make Sex', 'Free Jumps' and the really lame 'Long Live the Party' just don't stand up to his earlier material. I love Andrew W.K. and provided he comes back to my area, I will definitely be there to party, but this album just doesn't do it. The songs on, "The Wolf" seem to blend right into the next, making for one rather dull 40-minute song.

www.awkworld.com

James Wright



Devolver

"Sky Of Holes"

(SELF-RELEASED)

"Sky Of Holes" is the first semi-industrial rock CD that I have heard in sometime. Devolver's approach to this mechanized motif is that of deep darkness, and heavy depression. This shit is making me consider jumping out my bedroom window. For the most part the album is very slow, droney, and uses lots of extra ambient noises to add to the suicide factor. The vocals are similar to Jay Mascis (Dinosaur Jr.) in the way that they can go from low notes to a falsetto depending on what is needed. At times there are bridges that sound like something you would have heard on theat old 80's kids show "Land of the Lost". Nothing is really straight forward, there are effects on pretty much every track. "Sky Of Holes" isn't a bad album but if I listen to it anymore I'm going to choke myself out.

www.newmusiccanada.com

Thom C

Die Trying

"Self-titled"

(ISLAND/EL TONAL)

Taking a page from their label's owners (Papa Roach) Die Trying have released this rock heavy debut. Frankly there are just too many bands that, sound wise, are in the same vein as Die Trying and I didn't need another. 'Oxygen's Gone', 'Turn Up The Radio' and Runaway' will leave you wondering, "Who was that band? Where have I heard them before?" After listening to the album casually a couple times I realized I'm stuck with it. Their songs are too damn catchy and as much as I wanted to hate them, I just can't bring myself to do it. Coby Dick from Papa Roach lends his vocal talents to, 'Conquer The World' and the results are a great fucking song. They have written good numbers that are heavy on the rock and feature more hooks than a tackle box. If you were ever into Papa Roach at all, Die Trying has written the album that Papa Roach should have wrote for their sophomore effort. I wanted to hate this album; I really did...

www.dietryingmusic.com

James Wright

Naglfar

"Diabolical"

(Relapse)

I wish a black metal band would come out with a song that goes, "Worship the Devil, Worship the Devil, Worship the Devil!" over and over again. I think that would be sick. And it could be in a super screechy voice, just like all up in your face and wicked annoying. That would be rad. Naglfar comes close to achieving this epoch of lameness, but doesn't quite make the grade, as their lyrics are more along the lines of, "See the dawn of Satan's rise" and "I call on Hell, arise from your dwell", which lack the simplicity of my "Worship the Devil" lick. Naglfar is fronted by Alanis Morissette look-alike Jens Ryden, who sounds like he's singing over a CB radio half the time. While Ryden isn't assailing you with his yodeling you'll be treated to the strains of the rest of Naglfar, who actually all look like Alanis Morissette, except for the drummer, who looks like the ugly Hanson brother. Musically, Naglfar actually has a little variety to their act, as several melodic elements creep into the work at odd times, keeping things interesting until Ryden starts squawking on the horn again. Maybe they could recruit Alanis to sing backing vocals on their next tour of Hell, when it arises from its dwell, and maybe she could play the bell, unless they're on the beach and she finds a shell.

www.relapse.com

Brian Greenaway

40 below summer

40 Below Summer

"The Mourning After"

(Razor and Tie)

You wake up with your head pounding, mouth dry and you feel like shit. We've all had those mornings and I'm sure that's exactly what the band 40 Below Summer felt like when their debut record landed them on a label that went tits up mere weeks after their record release. Where their debut, "Invitation to Dance" was heavy on the nu-metal influences, they have tried to turn things around with their sophomore effort . This album sees the band adopting a heavier tone of bands like Mudvayne and Nothingface, but utilizing the vocal talents of singer Max Illedge to maximum melodic capacity. 'Breathless' is a perfect example of the band's growth and progression; the song is melodic, with a powerful hook in the chorus. 'F.E' is furious in it's blistering delivery in execution; heavy but with a direction and purpose. 40 Below Summer have delivered the goods in an album that is heavy, melodic and powerful. Wake up; it's the mourning after and the sun has never shined brighter.

www.40belowsummer.com

James Wright

Lyrics Born

"Later That Day"

(Quannum Projects)

Wake the town and tell the people about the brand new musical disc from Lyrics Born. Funky, soulful, skillful, thoughtful, Old School, New School, booty-shakin', neck breakin', Hip to the micky fickin' Hop. "Later That Day" is overloaded with B-Boy extras that truly stink of innovation. LB, one half of the Quannum Projects' Latyrx, has surpassed the best of MC's to the level of linguistic mastery. My man jumps from what he calls "M-Singing" to New School jazzy scat then back to some old straight up, serve you to your face emceeing. Minus production pieces by Cut Chemist, and DJ D-Sharp, the album is entirely produced by LB himself. In True Quannum fashion, the beats are heavy on the handclaps and funky bass lines. Highlights include an appearance by his Latyrx partner Lateef on a tune that can only be described as West Coast Dancehall. Gift of Gab, of Blackalicious fame, lends an ingenious hand in a rhyming phone call with LB on "Cold Call". The whole thing is fuckin' MASHIN'. This is how the West Coast rocks, that is if you aren't feeling' gangbanging. Whether it's fast rap, or slow chat, Lyrics Born is a shining example of how an MC should handle their biznizzle.

www.lyricsborn.com

Hugh Knight

DIVIDE BY ZERO

Divide By Zero

"Mirrors"

(Sinister Label)

With a growl reminiscent of Russ Rankin from Good Riddance and the throbbing, full bodied guitars of Bad Religion, Divide By Zero's five-track EP is tragically too-short. Beats fall just to the punk side of metal with a brief smattering of harmony. Heavy, fast, and relentlessly bleak, 'Alleys & Ways to Patterson' explodes with the violently spat lyric, "The stars collide" over and over again, working the surrounding tumult into a roaring tempest of thunderous riffs. The same ethic is played out again and again on the album, resulting in several songs that are probably a little too long, but it's tough to argue with a band capable of making such a succinct, devastating sound. TJ Milici's throaty vocals hover about the swirling chaos of the music, pushing the sound forward as it bites you in the face. If you're not stoked by now then you can't read and you can put the magazine back on the rack and stop trying to look smart.

www.dividebyzeromusic.com

Brian Greenaway

Enslaved

"Below the Light"

(The End)

If a band has ever played what might be classifiable as melancholy black metal, then it is Enslaved. The vocals have the snarling Tasmanian Devil black-metal quality fans of the genre enjoy, but the guitars cut a forlorn path through the overall dark landscape constructed by the music. The keyboards add to the soporific effect of the music. It's odd to feel lethargy oozing from aggressively mad vocals, blasting drums and uber-heavy guitars, but nevertheless, that's what the band manages to pull off. They create a mood that could go hand in hand with a bubble bath, scented candles and where normally an Enya or the "New Age Loon" CD would be playing, Enslaved's "Below the Lights" is heard. The music relaxes and lulls the listener whilst simultaneously bludgeoning and punishing. It's like a hardcore massage (No, I don't mean manual release) in which the masseuse beats the fuck out of your back. The little China girl jumps on your bones. You hear the cracking and feel the wind getting knocked out of you, but also feel the tension slipping away and all life's myriad aggravations melting from your marrow. Enslaved is also kind of dull.

www.enslaved.no

DICK

the resounding
ERIK LARSON

Erik Larson

"The Resounding"

(Small Stone)

Alabama Thunder Pussy drummer Erik Larson steps out on his own for his solo debut, 12 songs of regurgitated Sabbath riffs, 70s high school band vocals and trite lyrics. Unlike Pussy, Larson can't find the metallic groove to keep the music even remotely interesting. He offers a "Louder than Love"-era Soundgarden riff on "Our Voice" that's mildly entertaining but very far from the visceral grip that Kim Thayil locked on listeners. The biggest problem is Larsen, at times reminiscent of Rob Zombie, cannot sing. He shifts between melodic, supposedly spooky whispers and embarrassingly horrid growls. Larsen slows it down on the acoustic opening to, "Make It", a cautionary tale for aspiring rock and rollers. It's pretty painful to listen to, but his lyrics on, "I Feel Like Ted Nugent" outshine the other laughable moments on the album. "I feel like Ted Nugent / But I know I'm just a man / And I'll Do All I can / So I need to find some strength." Sounds more like post-core than a tribute to the Nuge. Larson is the Ray Cappo of Southern metal.

www.smallstone.com

Jeff Skruck

ESTRADASPHERE
QUADROPUS

Estradasphere

"Quadropus"

(Web of Mimicry)

Like Jucifer, Estradasphere has one foot in death metal ("Jungle Warfare") and one in indie rock. The group also offers a blue-eyed rap-metal homage to big-time wrestling ("Bodyslam"). Every track is self-contained in the diverse genre spectrum covered by this wild and wacky release. There is also a hilarious tongue-in-cheek, "At Least We'd Have Today" which is equal parts Motown pop-soul and Beach Boys. Skilled arrangements and a witty sense of humor congeals this grab-bag of styles into a jambalaya of impassioned musical schizophrenia. This mad experiment gets the blessing of Trey Spruance (Mr. Bungle, Faith No More) who testifies to the group's talents and arranged strings for "Speck".

www.estradasphere.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

Found Dead Hanging

"Dulling Occams Razor"

(Black Market)

Sigmund Freud would have a field day analyzing these clowns and their personality crises. While a band like Today Is The Day make something interesting out of their ham-fisted means of slamming noise and various extreme genres together, Found Dead Hanging are the perfect example of everything that can go wrong with the same idea. This monstrosity of an amalgam between hardcore and metal is almost too angular to enjoy. Like the jazz-metal of Candiria, they just start getting into a certain groove and then they switch paces entirely; but that's only the songs that aren't little more than guitar noodling laid over anti-beat drum "patterns" if you will. Just as you're about to turn it off, they break into these cool Pantera-influenced harmonic squeals and some stellar blast-beat metal territory or sloth-like drumbeats and shaking guitar riffs that are hot, sludgy slices of doom metal. Too bad you have to sit through what feels like hours of instrumental masturbation and pointless screaming to get to them.

www.blackmarketactivities.com

Keith Carman

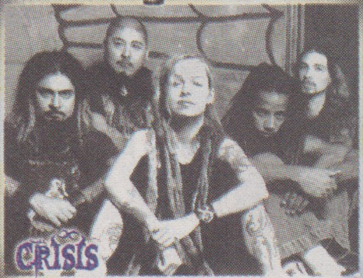
Easter Sunday April 11th @ 5pm

Massattack Radio and Musicians Institute Presents

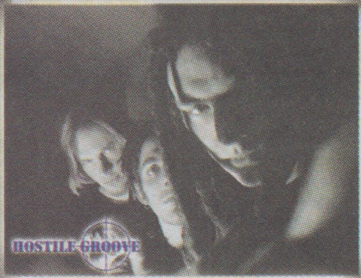
WHISKY UNDER SIEGE

Whisky Under Siege will be held at The Whisky A Go-Go (8901 Sunset Boulevard West Hollywood, CA 90069, 310 652-4202) on Sunday April 11th, Easter Sunday. Show starts at 5pm sharp, this is an ALL AGES show with FREE admission.

Performing live will be:



Crisis - 9:30pm



Hostile Groove - 8:30pm

SIXTY
CYCLE
BURN

Sixty Cycle Burn - 7:30pm

Trigger
Point

Trigger Point - 6:40pm

Imbrue - 5:50pm

Crucifix Doll - 5:00pm

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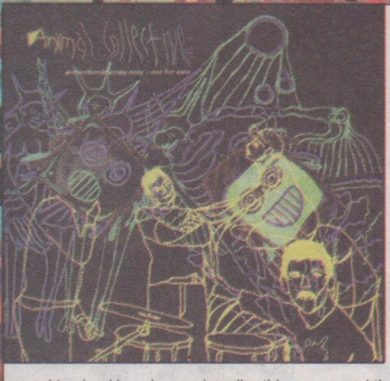


Animal Collective

"Spirit They've Gone, Spirit They've Vanished / Danse Manatee"

(FAT CAT)

Fat Cat Records has done everyone a great service. They have taken Animal Collective's first two albums and released them as one. This double-disc set contains number one and number two in Animal Collective's catalogue. The four rotating members have created two funky-reggaeish-folky-post-punker-prog classics. From spacey keyboards to hardcore to folk all in one song this combines the best of all worlds and somehow makes it come out smelling like pumpkin pie. How do you describe this new sound that has no name? The best way I can think of is to call it Animal Collective and to call it wonderful.

www.fat-cat.co.uk.com

Pete Soyer

Acceptance

Acceptance

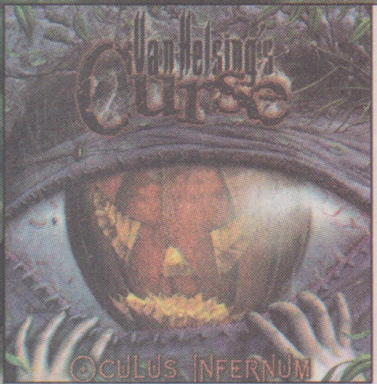
"Black Lines to Battlefields"

(THE MILITIA GROUP)

There aren't any waves right now. Seriously, I just went out and checked, so don't bother. Flat as R. Kelly's last girlfriend. You're better off just chilling at home with a few beers and maybe a poppy-indie rock album, like this new one from Seattle-based Acceptance. These guys have got a lot of Jimmy Eat World in them, minus the omnipresent melodies. "Black Lines" is a little weird because it's just seven tracks, which makes it either a long EP or a short LP. Either way, it's a pretty decent ride, unlike the surf right now. Boasting excellently poetic and introspective lyrics along with a healthy dose of understated guitars, the fivesome has pieced together a highly entertaining album that will fit in right next to your Juliana Theory and Further Seems Forever CDs. You'll like them, just like R. Kelly likes little girls. Why am I always hating on that guy? I should be more accepting, don't you think? Acceptance would accept him, I'm sure. They're good. Check 'em out. Enhanced CD, too.

www.acceptancemusic.com

Brian Greenaway



Van Helsing's Curse

"Oculus Infernum"

(KOCH)

Never let it be said that Dee Snider isn't ambitious. Most notorious as the frontman from 80's makeup caked rockers Twisted Sister, Dee has always attempted to do things on a theatrically grand scale. From rocker to radio DJ, to screenwriter and director (remember Dee's 1998 flick "Strangeland"? Yeah, me neither and I saw it) and now we have a concept album that comes with a sticker proclaiming it to be "...a musical ghost story concept album that is destined to be THE soundtrack for Halloween". Not. It's vaguely cool and about as scary as one of those "Scary Sounds of Halloween" albums you think are really neat as a kid. Musically, it's quite accomplished, it's just kind of bizarre. Basically, the vibe is this; Dee comes in all spooky with his "story" narration and (un)scary vocal tones as intro's and segues between musical segments, which run the gamut from gothic tinged Euro-metal, to cinematic arrangements that would work well as the backing track to some b-horror film. You know, the whole Omen church choir vibe. Here and there, recognizable traditional "Halloween" music (y'know, the kind you hear in the background for candy commercials around Halloween) is laced into the whole mix. It's ambitious and definitely something that took a lot of thought and effort. But in the end, is more cheesy fun than scary. Which is something Dee has always seem to be able to excel at. So maybe mission accomplished?

Bushman

ABORTED
GOREMAGEDDON

Aborted

"Goremageddon: The Saw and the Carnage Done"

(OLYMPIC)

Extremely heavy and gory grindcore in the grand tradition of Carcass with very pretty solos and scattered harmonics and such, but more straightforward in general song structure and vocal approach. I hear other influences emerging other than just their gore metal predecessors. Take note of the guitar player picking up cues from Violence circa "Eternal Nightmare". Aborted are certainly not at the top of the grindcore game, as that position is reserved for the likes of Exhumed and Mortician, however, they do offer cross-over opportunities for fans of straighter, more traditional, death metal. The band's sound may be of the fastest and vilest variety, but they can't be relegated strictly to the grindcore bargain bin. I'm sure that lyrically they're quite bloody and medically inclined with such song titles as "Parasitic Flesh Resection" and "Meticulous Invagination", (I don't even want to know what the hell that song's about), but don't be scared since you can't understand a word the singer's saying. Imagine a horse pissing in a tin bucket full of gravel. Now imagine that sound coming out of a three packs of smokes a day, sugar-junkies' rotting pie-hole. Now imagine your safe, special place where nobody can cause you harm or grief. Now touch yourself all over because you follow instructions so well.

www.goremageddon.be

DICK

Calling Blue Skies

Calling Blue Skies

"Thanks To You"

(DOWNFALL)

Oh, how the lines of subgenres are starting to blur! See, as you've heard any crusty punk blab on about, once was a time when there was no such thing as subgenres. Punk was punk and that included ska, hardcore... whatever. Then we got incredibly anal and subdivided everything to the point of being East Chicago and West Chicago emo. Proving that things are getting back to one big melting pot, Calling Blue Skies are the most obvious SoCal pop/punk band on the planet, but have gone for the oh-so-cool reference of "emo". Quite honestly, there isn't enough whining and griping on this record to classify it as emo. In actuality, the upbeat drum beats and bouncy vocal deliveries over four chord riffs are too much fun to be as obsessive as emo. Still, the annoying overuse of off-key backup harmonies is indelibly emo and almost makes "Thanks To You" lame if you can't block them out. All in all though, this is an impressive release for a super-indie band.

Keith Carman

saves the day

Saves The Day

"In reverie"

(VAGRANT)

What the fuck is this band's obsession with body parts being mutilated and befouled? I thought it was kind of weird how their previous album "Stay What You Are" was so focused on collecting blood to drink and publicly mutilating people and with Chris Conley's voice, it made the album almost laughable if it didn't sound so catchy and sweet, making the album much darker than people gave it credit for. Now on their follow up, "In reverie" I'm beginning to wonder if Chris needs to go to a shrink to figure out what his obsession with death and mutilation is all about. Most bands have a problem with always writing about girls and how their hearts were broken, but Saves The Day can't stop talking about "rotting flesh" and "carving someone up like meat" as the track "monkey" would indicate. On the title track "In Reverie" how could "Bottle breaking on my face" be "only a reminder of your love I lost a lifetime ago"? Building off their delicate indie rock sound, "In reverie" is a very unforgettable album, but I think we have a real life Red Dragon on our hands.

www.savestheday.com

Tom

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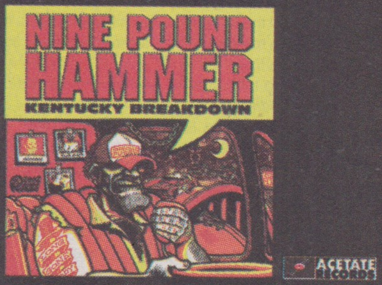
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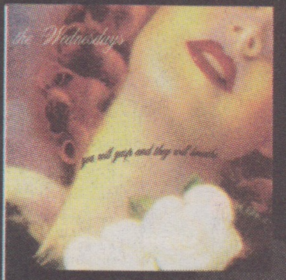
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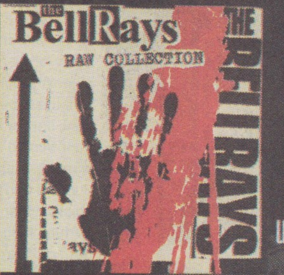
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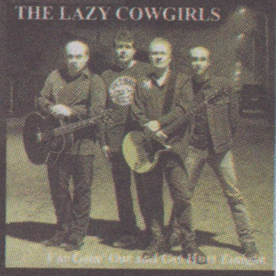
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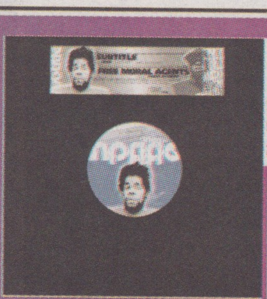
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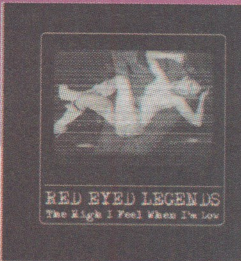
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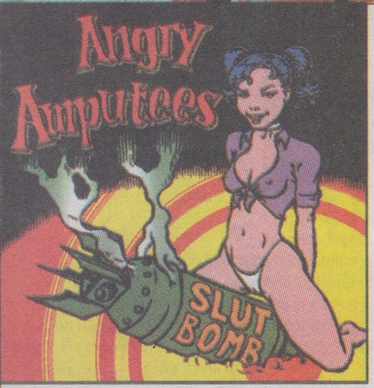


Angry Amputees

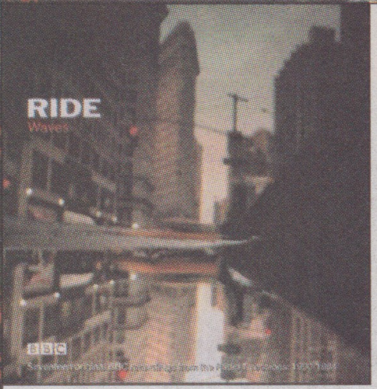
"Slutbomb"

(DEAD TEENAGER)

Thrashy girl punk from the streets of San Francisco. So very, very boring. Stacy Dee is the lady on the mic for the Amputees and she sounds like just about every other female rocker out there. The biggest problem facing not only the Angry Amputees but the entire girl rawwwk genre right now is that all the women are trying their best to sound like men. Why? Who wants to hear a chick that sounds like a dude? I don't want any dudes to sound like chicks either, you know? So while Stacy is harrumphing about "kicking somebody's dog" or "We're fist fighting" or "Let me bust a cap out"-it just sounds annoyingly fake and incredibly insipid. Musically, Angry Amputees aren't bringing much to the table, either. The San Francisco Weekly Music Awards voted them best punk band in 2002, which says more about the state of NorCal punk than it does the talent within Angry Amputees. "Slutbomb" is a total wash.

www.angryamputees.com

Brian Greenaway



Ride

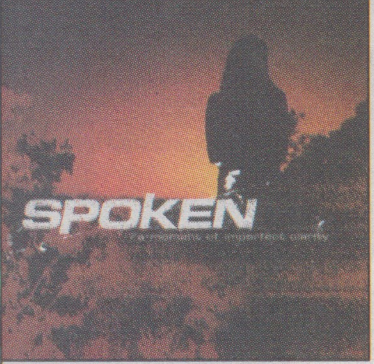
"Waves"

(THE FIRST TIME)

The more I am exposed to Ride the more I realize that they were a rock powerhouse of the early 90's. The early 90's was a time in my life when I was still awkwardly trying to figure out who I was. With hindsight 20-20 I would have been sporting a Ride tee shirt in 7th grade and sneaking out of gym class to go carry out dubious plans. This album of seventeen of the BBC's best Ride takes during 1990 - 1994 is definitely no disappointment with the sonic waves of guitar melodies that just sort of comb over the brain and put you in a rock coma. It's pretty fucking crazy how many awesome tracks Ride had. Two of the obvious classics are the visceral fuzzed out jam "Time of Her Life" and the loungey "Crown of Creation". Ride makes me wonder if some of the bands I'm really into are pioneers or not. I just don't think people realize how important this band was and really think any fan of rock n roll would enjoy the hell out of this album.

www.tftrecords.com

Tom



Spoken

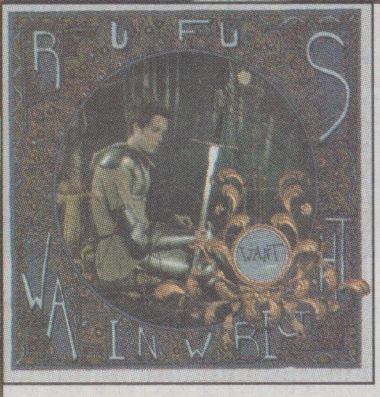
"A Moment of Imperfect Clarity"

(TOOTH AND NAIL)

Spoken is approaching its 10 year anniversary. They have been together since 1996 and grown up a lot in ten years. From rap metal to angry indie rock Spoken has kept their work ethic and fans in tact. A Moment of Imperfect Clarity catches the five members stepping their progression up another notch and wrenching out 11 songs perfect for driving with, studying with or just sitting with. If all the pop-punkers accomplished the sound they should be going for, they would be Spoken. There is no bubble-gum here, just straight forward rock tinted with enough emotion to grab new listeners and keep old ones. Imagine Alkaline Trio jamming with Toad the Wet Sprocket (Toad the Wet Sprocket was the sheeit back in the day). Matt Baird's vocals flow over the musical foundation under him like a stream over rocks. His expressiveness keeps each song, each verse, each line fresh and the disc is easy to listen to from one end to the other. If Spoken is here another 10 years and can improve on the second they have here, they will be alone at the top. Their trend for change has been good to them so far and hopefully they keep it up.

www.spokenmusic.com

Pete Soyer



Rufus Wainwright

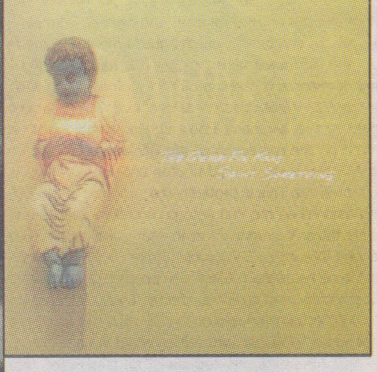
"Want One"

(DREAMWORKS)

The follow-up to "Poses", "Want One" echoes with the same wistful inspiration Wainwright is notorious for. The album swells with the melodramatic pace of a Broadway show tune and is articulated in Wainwright's traditional operatic way. You eventually find yourself entangled in its sincere emotional complexity; something that went missing in previous releases. Speaking to an acquired taste, Wainwright's charming lyrics gently wash over you in sweet, earnest waves, as he waxes poetic about the idiosyncrasies of life and misfortunes befallen him in love. He truly has a way with words, dredging his soul for descriptors that although simple, have a way of affecting the listener on a deeper level. This sweet prince will easily sweep you away with the tragic lyrics on tracks like "4th Street" and "Movies of Myself" and next thing you know you will have plucked your way through a box of Kleenex. This album is clearly written for dreamers and sentimental ladies longing for their knight in shining armor.

www.rufuswainwright.com

Miss Mia



The Quick Fix Kills

"Saint Something"

(MY PAL GOD)

When the first track "Lipstick Rendezvous" came on the first thing I did was turn my player up really loud. However, I'm not sure if I was getting into it or just trying to see if the disc is more enthralling at higher volumes. When it's all said and done you have another punk band that sincerely hopes that no one understands them. This seems to be the angle for so many bands these days. They get together with their friends and make music that sounds so good, but lyrically is so weird they don't even understand what the fuck is going on. Personally, I walk away either understanding or not understanding every band and The Quick Fix Kills is mind-numbing and impersonal. The vocals are very nasal and come off like the artists really don't give a fuck (which can be a good and bad thing at the same time). On the one hand the frustration is hard to duplicate and on the other hand it can drive you crazy. Some of the breakdowns are pretty cool though and I think it has a lot to do with the bassist playing like a soloist during the major breakdowns. Ironically, I think "Suicide is so 90's" is a sick ass track. This sound is very, very, tired.

www.thequickfixkills.com

Tom

Chaos UK

"Untitled Debut Album"

(DEAD RINGER)

What can I say? Chaos UK is a loud, noisy punk band, and this is the re-issue of their first album that was supposedly never available in the United States. If you like old school UK punk like Conflict, Subhumans, Rudimentary Peni and old MDC, then you're obviously not going to go wrong picking this CD up and if the album's original eleven tracks aren't enough for you, then this re-issue is fleshed out with an additional eleven bonus tracks. That's twice as many songs for those of you who can't do the math. Chaos UK hits me on a more base level; they strike an animalistic chord. They're more of a "tear the fucking walls down and punch holes in the ceiling" punk band for me than the somewhat more intellectual strains of punkiness found in Crass and the Dead Kennedy's. Go out and get some real punk in your diet. Your Green Day cover band could use some more variegated influences. I know you think that that NOFX CD in your collection makes you old school enough for your fourteen year old girlfriend, but once her breast buds fully develop into womanly mams she'll dump you for the first Chaos UK fan that introduces her to the joys of hard cider.

DICK

Nightwish
"Century Child"
(Century Media)

Finland's Nightwish are the height of operatic quasi-goth metal. With a pleasant female vocalist named Tarja and crystal clear production they capture the cinematics and theatrics of metal, goth and progressive rock and mash 'em into a high-minded mix that is better than that description might suggest. In fact, Tarja evokes the color of Kate Bush enough that it is easy to detach from the heavy metal tag. Keyboardist Tuomas acknowledges his love of film soundtracks and it comes through. They rev up the guitars on several songs but they never take over, instead letting the complex structures act as the focal point.

www.nightwish.com

Anthony Mark Happel

Ex-Models
"Zoo Psychology"
(French Kiss)

"Zoo Psychology" is the Ex-Models' follow up to their 2001 debut "Other Mathematics". While the Ex-Models still belong to the much hyped New York no-wave revival, they've taken things to another level entirely with their latest album. "Zoo Psychology" is a savage and punishing experiment in carefully crafted (and then carelessly destroyed), herky-jerky, semi-electronic, noise rock. James Chance has been put through the blender here rather than set up on a pedestal. A damn fine album recorded by the legendary Martin Bisi and a must for those of you still interested in hearing people do new things with what's left of rock and roll. The Ex-Models are proving it's still possible.

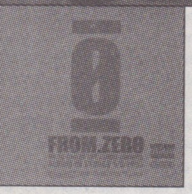
Zack

Giving Chase
"Nothing Ever Changes"
(Jump Start)

Merging hardcore and punk rock has become more and more common over the recent years, the only problem is that there are only a handful of bands that do it well. Giving Chase has positioned themselves to be added to the list of bands that merge the two effortlessly. Taking the best elements of a band like Boy Sets Fire and combining it with the punk rock attitude of a band like Anti-Flag makes Giving Chase a band that can develop into a forerunner on the scene. Mike Woliansky is definitely one of the group's strengths as he sings and screams with conviction and emotion making the music that much more potent. The one drawback I saw to this CD was the fact that although everything sounds great, nothing is truly all that memorable and missing that certain punch that will push the band over the edge and into the spotlight.

www.givingchase.net

James Wright



From Zero
"My So Called Life"
(Arista)

Wow, was I ever wrong about From Zero! I had them pegged them as a total nu-metal band that was pretty one-sided. You know what I'm talking about; I figured the songs would be heavy until the chorus where the real singer showcases his melodic vocals. WRONG. These guys are super melodic but very original. As I sit here thinking of someone to compare them to for you guys I really can't. From Zero kind remind me of Alice in Chains or the mellower Soundgarden at times. I know that's a horrible comparison if you like these guys but that's as close as I can get. This album comes complete with a cover of Phil Collins "I Don't Care Anymore" that's pretty cool. People will be pleasantly surprised by this album.

www.fromzero.com

James Wright

Feable Weiner
"Dear Hot Chick"
(Doghouse)

Feable Weiner? Before I even threw this in I knew it was going to be poppy, hyper, and super fuckin' wacky. I'm not even going to go into a shit talking rant about the name, it would be way too easy. This sounds like a cross between Wheatus, and a buddy bonding moment in a feel-good teen movie. My God. There's even silly plays on the song titles, "Handjabs", "Attorneying Me On". I bet all their buddies just laugh their asses off at these song titles. Personally I thought the hoity-toity punk vibe via early to mid nineties had died. Well, there are plenty of hooks and it probably couldn't get any poppier than this, which I'm sure will have massive teen appeal. Ok, if you wear skate shoes but don't skate, are sixteen years old and drive a huge new lifted truck that you didn't pay for, and are a smash hit in high school buy this album and bask in the good times. Everyone else that is living in reality, steer clear.

www.feableweiner.com

Thom C.

Brother Ali
"Shadows on the Sun"
(Rhymesayers)

He's albino and overweight, Brother Ali brags on his latest album "Shadows on the Sun". But the beautiful truth is that Brother Ali doesnt care. Ater a little hiatus the mighty Rhymesayers label has released another album to their credit. Slug, who has become the record labels poster boy, has stolen much of the spotlight, but his hip hop partner in crime from the Twin Cities lets his voice be heard loud and clear over finely tuned beats. Some might be set back by his over usage of political wordplay and deep religious messages, but let us not forget that Brother Ali is a born again Muslim. A lot of Ali's messages can be compared closely to the radical East Coast duo Dead Prez or even old school Public Enemy sounds. "The ironic part of it is Im not trying to scare these kids, just trying to connect them to the heritage", Ali quips on "Pay Them Back" one of the albums best tracks. The talented emcee does a superb job at mixing up his rhyme style on basically every song. Listen to the tracks "Star Quality" and "Missing Teeth" to understand what I mean. Brother Ali can flat out rhyme. Some may even have a good argument that he surpasses the Atmosphere front man. One thing is definite. This is easily the best produced Rhymesayers album thanks to producer Ant. Although his last album "Rites of Passage" was overlooked by critics and fans alike, "Shadows on the Sun" proves that Brother Ali is one of Minnesotas proudest voices.

Hitboy

Hanzel und Gretyl
"Uber Alles"
(Metropolis)

An American, English speaking band dresses up in lederhosen and pretends to be a German, German speaking, industrial dance band. The music isn't all that bad. It has a cutting aggressive edge made more violent by the rough guttural sound of the German language on English speaking ears. The vocals are a coarsely shouted, distortion laden affair that easily recalls Ministry or that "du, du habst mich" band who really is from Germany. Some who come across this album will be taken aback by the sounds sampled from Hitler rallies and the lyrics about blood and superiority. The band says it's all just a joke and everyone's entitled to their jokes, but I don't have to find them funny. In fact, I don't. Be honest. Don't waste my time with your stinking third Reich theatrics. I like the look of the guy and gal who make up the band respectively as Hanzel and Gretyl. They have a cool old world German look to them mixed with giant boots and goggles. The music gets the blood pumping, but there's no way this could hold up to repeat listenings. It's not that it grates on a guy. Rather it's that you just start feeling like scum listening to songs with titles like "SS Deathstar Supergalactik" and "Third Reich From the Sun."

www.hanzelundgretyl.com

DICK

HEADFIRST
It's getting better

Headfirst
"It's Getting Better"
(Slef-Released)

Finally an indy band with some real fucking potential. Headfirst are heavy on the rock and they do it with conviction. "It's Getting Better" sounds good and the songs are well written with some great hooks. 'Close Your Eyes' has a great hook and even better solo in the middle. Headfirst are somewhere in the middle of a band like Papa Roach (minus the rapping) and the dynamics of a band like Finch. With a little bit of work on their songs this band could go quite far.

www.headfirstrock.com

James Wright

Green Day
"1039 / Smoothed Out Slappy Hours"
(Lookout!)

Green Day was first introduced to me by Phil back in junior high. He showed me a camcorder VHS tape that included the band performing at his cousin's high school in probably, oh, 1990, and then he played the vinyl EP off of Lookout! that he bought at the local Taaang! record store when it was located in Pacific Beach. I later purchased this album (the original release) and consequently every Green Day album after that (yes, even "Warning"). So here we are, 2004, fourteen (!!!) years after this album's original release, and what do we have? All the tracks are "re-mastered", which I guess means 'made to sound better', the CD insert seems bigger and has a few more drawings and comments (I don't remember; mine is lost) AND it's an enhanced CD. What does enhanced mean? That means someone over at the luxurious Lookout! mansion is fucking smart and filled up the remainder of the CD with a few videoclips, scans of fliers, some candid photos and four live tracks from a radio broadcast. This is probably the best part of the CD, and it fucking astonishes me that in today's rocky music industry other labels haven't caught on to this (and if they do, they include a second CD and/or DVD, which is cool but a bit extravagant and probably helps them keep their prices high). You see, CD's have a set amount of space available. This album probably took up, oh, 3/5th's of the room on the CD. That means there was 2/5th's of space available, which they could have left as is, or filled with cool Green Day-related stuff. The duplication factory doesn't give a shit if you give them a full CD master or an empty one; it's not like they charge more if it's full, so why NOT throw in every little mp3, photo or whatever of a band you have laying around? But, good job, Lookout!, and good job Green Day; this album is just another reminder of just how good they were. Err, are.

www.greenday.com

PR!

Velvet Acid Christ

"Hex Angel: (Utopia - Dystopia)"

(Metropolis)

Velvet Acid Christ is perfect for fans of mid-era Skinny Puppy albums such as "Remission" and "Vivisect VI". If you long for pure old industrial mayhem with lots of layered sampling, a mid-tempo dance beat and a dark dissonant aura fueled by super distorted (think Nivek Ogre) vocals, horror show themesong keyboards and eerie noises, then you can go out and buy Velvet Acid Christ's "Hex Angel: (Utopia - Dystopia)" and long no more. Although I can't particularly say that Velvet Acid Christ does anything too original with their industrial style, I can say that I've heard enough mentally challenged brainiacs attempt to rape Skinny Puppy's old school sound to know that Velvet Acid Christ is at the top of the game, and even though what Skinny Puppy did they did fifteen years ago, Velvet Acid Christ gives them a true run for their money. VAC may be SP's only true competition to ever emerge on the industrial scene. And, yes, I know there is no direct competition and that VAC most likely harbors deep respect and gratitude towards Skinny Puppy's music, but that doesn't mean I can't hail this as the rebirth of "Vivisect VI", which is Skinny Puppy's best album. It's like the Dalai Lama getting reborn in new human incarnations; the dark spirit of Skinny Puppy circa 1988 has returned and you won't go wrong worshipping at the altar of its new incarnation. The CD booklet also contains some great artwork to accompany your aural experience.

www.velvetacidchrist.com

DICK

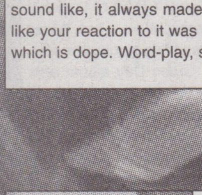
Deep Rooted

"Iomos Mardad"

(All Natural)

Ever since "Common" kicked the door down and put "Shytown" on the hiphop map, Chicago has been getting busy. First of all, who ever feels this CD, is going to be able to hear a strong admiration for Nas. Not in a way that sounds like biting, but in a way that hiphop was made for, expanding the formula that makes it. DeepRooted MC Io and his producers have a long future in front of them. The lyrics are positive, the delivery is on point plus the most refreshing thing about this whole package is that it sounds like it's been here all along. MC Io also has a solid connection to the hiphop family that's running through out Chicago. Not only does his telephone rollcall sound official, it comes off feeling relaxed. If you think back about what bboy music use to sound like, it always made you feel like it was truly sanctified, like your reaction to it was natural, which is the true deff in that which is dope. Word-play, song-structure, it's all present.

C.Diggs



I Defy

"The Firing Line"

(Reflections)

Dear God, I think I just dropped a load in my pants. This is some of the sweetest hardcore I've heard in months! Furious and relentless, this stuff attacks your ears like a pitbull setting course for a chunk of baby fat. Not to detract from either band, but listening to The Firing Line has the same emotional destruction as the first time you heard Converge. But add to that, with a lot cleaner production, and a little touch of Refused's over-the-top delivery as accented by these pummeling breakdowns! How the hell can one band do so much without being at the top of the heap? It's just a matter of time, kiddies…then all of you will be frontin' in your I Defy t-shirt, talking about how you're old school. Whatever…just buy the fucking album.

www.reflectionsrecords.com

Keith Carman

Leng Tch'e

"Manmadepredator"

(Willowtip)

Belgian grind-core. Belgian grind-core mixed with leftist politics. Belgian grind-core that tries to be humorous. Belgian grind-core, comedy written in English. Belgian grind-core funny men writing in English fail to be funny except by unintentional language barrier problems. The music is, of course, fast, grinding, shredding and ball-busting. The vocals are, of course, shrieked here and grunted there. I like the fact that they're mad at the right-wing. I can back that; I like to see bands angry at the world that's fucking them over and slowly turning us all into the indentured servants of credit card and insurance companies. I think the band would benefit by abandoning grind-core, going in an industrial direction, dropping the humor and writing political songs in their mother tongue. I should mention that without a lyric sheet you won't be able to understand a damn word anyway and even with the lyric sheet I'm not even close to 50% certain that what he's screaming is what's laid down on the lyric sheet. Lots of between song samples lifted from the third Evil Dead movie, "Army of Darkness," which goes to show they have lousy taste in film. Everyone knows "Army of Darkness" is shit. Sure, Bruce Campbell fans and Sam Raimi fans don't want to admit it now, but come on people, surely you felt betrayed when that movie came out to your local multi-plex and stunk up the place from frame one by abandoning the ending of "Evil Dead 2?" It might be hard to take, and I know many of you out there even want a fourth Evil Dead, but trust me; you really don't. You don't want that anymore than you want Leng Tche's "Manmadepredator." I mean, what the fuck is up with all the moronic Three Stooges shenanigans? People who like the Three Stooges have a problem, man. A big problem. Marx Brothers. That's where it's at. Klaatu Verada Niktoo my ass, man.

www.lengtche.deathmetal.be

DICK

Maxeen

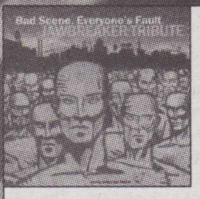
"Self-Titled"

(Side One Dummy)

I just got back from this corporate mixer in Long Beach. I'd love to talk shit about it but someone from my work will probably read it and be all offended and then I'll get fired and then I won't be able to afford health care and I'll die. That would make you so happy wouldn't it? If I died. I hate you. Maxeen can afford health care because they're in a popular band that plays with Bad Religion and The New Amsterdams and stuff, despite the fact that their debut album is gratingly annoying and as far different from their live shows as you could imagine. Gone are the punk riffs and attitude Maxeen so prominently displays on stage, replaced instead by poppy vocals and trite lyrics. Why? Why, why, why? Tom Bailey's voice is diluted to the point of a shrill screech, devoid of any attitude or anything resembling what you heard on Stage Two at the Warped Tour. Musically, Maxeen has borrowed a page from Tora! Tora! Torrance!'s treble clef filled book and made what is almost dance-punk, full of up-tempo rhythms and skitterish beats that try their best to grab your attention but will probably leave you looking for the skip button on your Discman.

www.maxeen.com

Brian Greenaway



Various Artists

"Bad Scene, Everyone's Fault - Jawbreaker Tribute"

(Dying Wish)

Has there ever been a punk/indie band that hasn't at one time covered a Jawbreaker (or Jets to Brazil) song? I remember thinking the band I was in was really cool because we covered "Kiss The Bottle" a wonderful song about neon light liquor stores and hurting the ones you love because you can't stop drinking. It's probably the one song I've ever actually wanted to really be about Blake. This tribute album includes "Kiss The Bottle" and many other great songs such as "Want", "Ashtray Monument" and "Chesterfield King". These are songs I grew up with and hearing them reminds me of being a confused 15 year old with nothing to do but get in trouble and go to shows. It makes it hard not to like these covers, but if you must know I would have done half these songs exactly how the artists did them. These songs are meant to be played loud, fast and with a lot of distortion which I thought the artists that included Jeff Ott (of Fifteen), Duvall, Face to Face, and The Travoltas were careful to include. If you don't have the original albums go buy those; for long-time listeners buy "Etc." for all those hard to find 7" tracks; if you need more, pick up this record, you might remember what the big deal was.

www.dyingwishrecords.com

Tom

Longwave

"The Strangest Things"

(BMG)

The Longwave's latest, "The Strangest Things" is a record of colorful, emotional tunes with each track exhibiting different personalities. The idea isn't to blow you away with pompous exhibitions of musical know-how. This is an example of how letting true emotion and the use of clever accents can make a simple tune into a piece of art. The overall personality of the record is melancholy, in a U2 "War" kind of way. The bass and drums warmly flow, the guitars pick through notes accenting the rolling bass lines, and at times syncopate with the other instruments for a larger display. The vocals accompany Longwave's music perfectly, they are heartfelt, thoughtful, honest and are the final touch on this great record. Some may say that the Longwave sound is a lot like that of fellow scene mates, and friends, The Strokes. While this may be somewhat true, who fuckin' cares? One listen to "The Strangest Things" and it will become clear that Longwave have depth, originality, and shouldn't be labeled as a rip-off. Two thumbs up, four stars, and all that shit. I can hardly wait for the next record.

www.longwavetheband.com

Thom C.

Mastodon

"Remission"

(Relapse)

RAAAHHHHHH... RAWWHHH-HH...ROARRRR... WE ARE MASTODON! FEAR US WHEN WE ROARRRR! If you read that part of the review then you can imagine what this record is like. All kidding aside, this isn't a bad album. Although the singer fucking screaming in one monotone screech for 40 minutes got on my nerves. Despite that, Mastodon features some fucking great technical musicianship that, at times, will leave you in complete awe. They can go from some of the most somber beautiful passages, right into this blistering heavy as fuck dirge much like Neurosis. A cool bonus is the DVD showing the band live, although it had shitty sound. I think if you're into a band like Neurosis you will definitely dig what Mastodon is up to.
www.relapse.com

James Wright

Cannibal Corpse

"Wretched Spawn"

(Metal Blade)

One staple of extreme music will always be Cannibal Corpse. These guys have made a career out of writing mini-horror movies and turning them into songs. Nobody else has ever touched the genius of songs like "Fucked With A Knife" or "She Cums Blood" quite like Cannibal Corpse. With "Wretched Spawn" the Cannibal boys have turned in some punishing riffs accompanied by some killer blast beats. The dual guitar attack of O'Brien and Owen is pretty fucking amazing on this record, while George "Corpsegrinder" Fisher turns in a great grunt filler performance. If you dug Cannibal before, then this is some of the best stuff yet. If you didn't dig Cannibal before, then why the hell are you reading this? On a completely unrelated side-note, I've always wondered with a name like "Corpsegrinder", do your parents acknowledge you as that? At dinner would they say, "Hey Corpsegrinder, pass the pepper!" Things that make you go hmmmmm...
www.cannibalcorpse.net

James Wright

Various Artists

"Orange County, New York vs. Orange County, California"

(Orange Peal / Smell My Thumb)

Just reading this compilation's title will give you a pretty good idea as to what to expect. The two-cd record pits Orange County bands from California and New York against one another in an all out, no holds-barred, cage match to the death. Also as expected, the California disc features many more ska and poppy acts. Starting off with Forces of Evil's super-ska stylings, California fails to display much variation until Rock Kills Kid offers a brief relief with their standout track "Dream". A creative little rock song, "Dream" is a well-written tune that rocks some falsetto background vocals whose placement make the melody a hit. Back to the poppy, Homegrown and Madcap also make solid appearances. The next block of tracks features the more metal or aggressive tunes performed by the likes of Avenged Sevenfold and Eighteen Visions as well as the punk and street punk stylings of El Nada and Straight Faced. California ends the round with Up Syndrome whose track "Last Song Forever" is an acoustic, heart felt, teenage ballad with violins. The New Yorkers won't take this sitting down and start off with another standout track in Autopilot Off's "Wide Awake". What follows is more metal/punk rather than being so heavy on the ska side of the country. Shai Hulud and Slugworth dish out the rock jams while Soul 4 Sale and The Schematics try to counter with their ska and easy listening punk. Makeoutmusic proves to be New York's ringer with their tune "Stand Up". It's funny because Makeoutmusic makes music that definitely isn't. It's fast paced street punk with the classic "Punk rock's not dead" chant that we have all come to love. When the gloves are off, New York proves to be tougher in the world of punk boxing matches between counties on opposite sides of the country with the same name.
www.orangepeal.com
www.smtrecords.com

Campbell

Deep Concentration 4

"Wrecking The Floor"

(Deep com/Om Records)

Off the top! This CD/comp has "Madd Club Bangers". Some tracks outshine others, but all said it, has strong production all the way through. The 15 cuts that make up the disc will make any HipHop DJ's crate fatter. Most of the production work ranges from keyboards to the tried and true MPC. The compilation features mostly underground artist doing what they do best. Those who are following the latest trends of the over-hyped, need not apply. Stand-outs tracks bieng The Nextmens "31st February", Planet Asia's "Sinista Scratch" or the burner by Strange Fruit Project "Speed Bump". Strong rymes and dope songwritting, coupled with solid production work makes "D.C.4", compelling Hiphop ya'll.

C.Diggs

Soul Position

"8,000,000 Stories"

(Fatbeats / Rhymesayers)

On this CD, MC Copywrite shows himself to be a lyricist of extreme range and depth. Not only does he come off different on every other song, but he keeps the comedy popping throughtout his storytelling. Copywrite gets mad props for being able to carry this CD pretty much all by his lonesome. Production varies, never leaving you or the overall feel of the project sounding overstretched. Strong musical craftsmanship is also very apparent throughout the mix of songs being offerd to the listener. Some of the lyrical content does fall into too much of an after school backpackers' convention. Stand-out tracks being "Right Place Wrong Time", "Share This and "Survival" (feat.Greenhouse Effect).

C.Diggs

Pinhead Gunpowder

"Compulsive Disclosure"

(Lookout!)

Pinhead Gunpowder basically sounds like Green Day + Crimpshrine, which is fitting, being that Billie Joe sings and Aaron, Jason and Bill are from Crimpshrine, Monsula and The Influents, respectively. The band's been around forever (13+ years), but they don't really tour or anything as it's more of a side project, although the occasional show is not unheard of. This album is good, Pinhead are good, but unless I'm mistaken (I didn't get any paperwork for this album from the label), only one of these songs is totally 100% original never-before-released Pinhead material. The rest can be found in their original form, on compilations, vinyl, singles and the such. Regardless, it's cool when they stick all the stray animals in one barn (?) and this a fun, albeit short (14 minutes for nine tracks) album worthy of ears.
www.lookoutrecords.com

pr!

My Chemical Romance

"I Brought You My Bullets, You Brought Me Your Love"

(Eyeball)

Despite the finger-in-throat obnoxious album name, this is a good fucking disc. Sure, it's nothing new, just peppy... (sigh) indie postcore punk (fucking genres) with the same dopey lyrics everyone's used to. My Chemical Romance is mostly peppy Thrice sifted with the utmost ear friendly pop that Blood Brothers ever made, and as I said, it's pretty fucking good. Tracks like "Honey This Mirror Isn't Big Enough For the Two of Us" and "Drowning Lessons" are among the highlights on this album. While all of the tracks are redeemable, by the 7th or 8th song, I do start getting sick of listening to the CD as, if anything, the band has almost the same direction (especially vocally) in every track. All in all, a very good release, making it obvious why they're now on a major, and I'll check 'em live. And hey, good job Geoff Rickly (yeah, Thursday's Geoff) for producing this album. It's a jelly!
www.mychemicalromance.com

pr!

Fall Out Boy

"Take This To Your Grave"

(Fueled By Ramen)

Yet another huge addition to the already stacked FBR line-up is Fall Out Boy. I got a chance to hear this band on their last split with Rocket Summer and, frankly, found them forgettable. I guess Rocket Summer just seemed like a much better band. However, now that I have been exposed to them more (like 25 samplings of their album) I've come to enjoy their power pop punk sound. I actually have a friend who owns a company that makes skate and rollerblading videos and when he asked me who he should put in his next video I recommended he put Fall Out Boy's "Saturday" because the screaming is pretty cool, and the hooks are catchy enough to be the opening song on the next Fox sitcom. It's also funny how they thank Sean "Doobie Snacks" O'Keefe, Sean "Hotbox the Camero" O'Keefe and Sean "Dimebag" O'Keefe. O'Keefe is actually their producer. Fall Out Boy will have a huge following in no time.
www.fueledbyramen.com

Tom

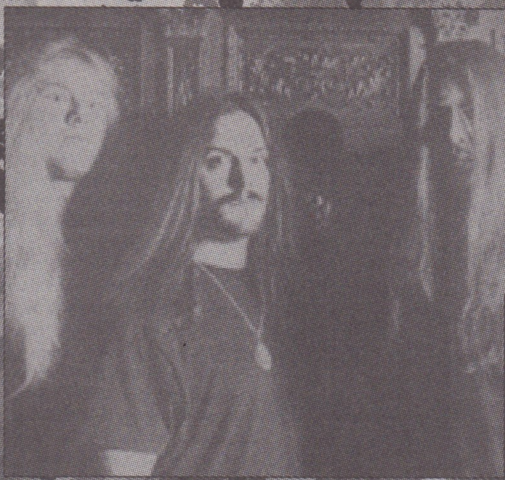
Sleep Comes Down

"Wax Romantic"

(Uprising)

It's time to stop and take stock of the things that make us smile, the people that we love, and the crappy music that we can throw across the living room into the trashcan if we so desire. Such is the case with Sleep Comes Down, an emo band that's trying way too hard to wear their hearts on their respective sleeves. Each mid-tempo ballad worms its way into the next with so many sappy sentiments that I'm actually scared it will gum up my CD player as it spins. Chris Taylor's vocals are fairly nasal, making it difficult to separate some of his lyrics from the annoying delivery. Take these lines from "Forgot Everything", the fourth track on "Wax Romantic": "If I never told a lie to your face / then I would be lying to my own / Honest, I swear, I saw it in your face / You couldn't care less now and I'm about to wax romantic about the first time I saw you." Yeah, that's kind of cool, even if it is repetitive. So why cheapen legitimate feelings with substandard singing? I dunno, but it happens time and again on the album.
www.sleepcomesdown.cjb.net

Brian Greenaway



The High Llamas
"Beet, Maize & Corn"
(Drag City)

It is instrumental music with alluring, but delicate melodies. The band eschews guitars for a string section. It drifts you down a river of "Pet Sounds" and Tin Pan Alley, '70s soft rock and cinematic scores. While the rhythms percolate, melody and harmony weave and intertwine to sublime effect on this record of gentle orch pop. Sean O'Hagan is a master of the light touch with a wide palette of sounds on this sweet pocket symphony.
www.dragcity.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

Jean Grae
"The Bootleg of The Bootleg EP"
(Babygrande)

Jean Grae came to rip a rapper's nuts off, along with a couple tongues or two. The EP is composed of grimy street tales, and precise wordplay that paints a dark picture of New York City 2003. The first track let's you know how much Jean don't give a rat's ass, with the repetitive lament "Fuck You, Fuck You, Fuck You". If Lil' Kim and Foxy Brown weren't such pretty harlots, and MC Lyte wasn't busy makin' appearances on daytime talk shows, and movie soundtracks with Beyonce', I would have thought all three were stuffed inside that big old head of Jean Grae's. The sampler is a good listen for 6 joints, and I'm positive a full album's worth of Jean's spit will be a bone crusher. The appearance of Cannibal Ox shows that she keeps rough company. After a few years of building her rep in the New York underground, with her previous project Natural Resource, Jean Grae is primed to mow down the rest of the world in a head smashin' Hip-Hop fashion.
www.jean-grae.com

Hugh Knight

Sulaco
"Self-Titled"
(Relapse)

Upon initial listen to Sulaco (an "all-star band" of sorts if you can call survivors from various forgettable death metal bands "stars"), one is put off faster than imagining naked photos of Roseanne Barr with a strap-on. After a few spins though, their slightly derivative sound is moderately appealing. Sulaco know when to go full-on with blast beats worthy of a Cannibal Corpse album, but they don't sully these four tracks by overdoing it. Surprisingly, at times the delivery rides extremely close to newer hardcore lines. With thunderous breakdowns and searing hot vocals that shriek instead of rumbling like a bad case of diarrhea, this might be "traditional" (read: kinda predictable), but it's not the worst sin Relapse has been responsible for unleashing onto metal. To quote Mr. Burns: "I know what I hate…I don't hate this."
www.relapse.com

Keith Carman

Deicide
"Scars of the Crucifix"
(Earache)

(Review narrated in a throaty, rumbling, gargling Death Metal roar)
I can't really tell you what they are talking about, but it's HAAAAAARSH! Their last album was a half-hearted, contract obligation fulfiller with a label that shall remain nameless (Meep, Meep-Gargle). If you jumped the Deicide ship because that last album was shitty, why don't I throw you a rope. "Scars of the Crucifix" is a full power, full potential thrill ride through hell. Mean old Glen Benton's voice sounds like he's trying to scream you a story while choking on some poor chump's blood. Their dark arrangements are fast and heavy, while their ultra-technical style shines through the dark sounds of demons playing instruments. I would recommend this album to anyone who wants to: impress their boss at a company picnic with a soundtrack for a game of horseshoes; choose the right background for an anniversary dinner with your sweetheart; play something educational in the car for your baby riding shotgun in a car seat; or, bump something wicked out of their low rider when their driving through a cemetery on a Sunday afternoon. With "Scars of the Crucifix" in your possession, the possibilities are endless. Kind of like damnation.

Hugh Knightstalker

Keelhaul
"Subject to Change Without Notice"
(HydraHead)

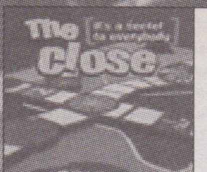
Keelhaul play super heavy, thrashy music, mostly driven by the instruments and their chaotic, staccato riffs, rather than any real vocals. Sound interesting? Well, you're an idiot. Sorry, that was uncalled for. You're not an idiot, you're just easily entertained. Read on. The dozen tracks on "Subject to Change" are a cacophony of sludgy pseudo-metal, albeit a technically correct metal, employing the methods of a Dillenger Escape Plan and mixing it with the madness of a Sepultura. The result, sadly, is something far removed from these seminal acts. "Shackleton" is probably my favorite track but not necessarily because of the music (it sounds as leaden as the rest of the release) but mostly because I think Shackleton is my favorite explorer. If you haven't ever read "South" or "Endurance" then you are truly a sad sack. Listen at your own risk.
www.hydrahead.com

Brian Greenaway

Surrounded
"Saftey In Numbers"
(Deep Elm)

Ohh YYaaaww Yaw! Sveden! Sveden! Just kidding. I'm just jealous because Surrounded is from Sweden and I want to check it out it some day. "Saftey In Numbers" is somewhat on the Brit-rock side but with bigger drums and rawness in the vocals and guitar tones. "Saftey In Numbers" is a strongly sentimental album expressed impressively through all its musicans. The vocals are heavy-hearted and honest throughout, the guitars sway and drone and the drums and bass provide dutiful support. The mood of the album doesn't ever really steer away from somber, but at the same time creates a place that you'll be in for a little while. This is the kind of album that for some reason sounds extra good on overcast days or lazy hang time. Cellos and keys chime in and keep everything warm and ambient and at times cut through the "Saftey In Numbers'" bleakness to make sure you don't do anything to hasty. I'm serious, Surrounded is probably the least "feel good" band that I've heard in a while. I would recomended it on a clouldy day with some chicken soup and sandwiches.
www.surrounded.se

Thom C



The Close
"It's a Secret to Everybody"
(Moodswing)

The Close offer a sophisticated, musically intricate indie rock full of varied style and texture. The Atlanta transplant group has accessible songs that are full of tricks without contrived. However, it is the artful complexity, the engaging intricacy of these songs that makes the album compelling. All the elements at work here given the material dynamics and constant variation make this album one that can be put on again and again.
www.thecloserocks.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

Small Brown Bike
"The River Bed"
(Lookout!)

I wish I had a small brown bike. Sometimes walking out to check the surf is too much of a time consuming chore and I'd love to just hop on my little coffee colored two wheeler and be off through the bluffs, laughing gaily while the wind rushes through my wavy hair. In the distance I see my boyfriend, sitting coyly under the shade of a palm tree, stripped to the waist and...oh, sorry. Whoops, silly me. Um, uh, right. "The River Bed" is aggressive indie rock from SBB, full of powerful vocals and emo-ed out, angular guitars. The band has crafted a wonderful album here, full of lush, varied textures and sounds without ever writing a blatantly poppy track. No, the boys from Minnesota stay true to their roots, creating an almost angry, ominous feel to many of the tracks that reverberate throughout the album. SBB never resort to screaming either, as the brutally honest tones are conveyed with measured amounts of harmony and verse, atmosphere and longing. The use of melodies within "The River Bed" is particularly of note, as tracks such as "Day and Nightmares" and "A Declaration of Sorts" will have snatches of beautifully resonant poetry stuck in your head for hours. While "The River Bed" sometimes gets a little too somber for its own good, there's too much to like here to not wish you had a little bike.
www.smallbrownbike.com

Brian Greenaway

The Silence
"Audio Alchemy"
(Self-Released)

I try to be thankful for New Found Glory, Good Charlotte, Simple Plan and the rest of the pop-punkers. I don't like the music, but it is a step in the right direction from all the rap-metal and teenie-bop floating over the airwaves. Even if it is shitty punk, at least it is punk. But then The Silence comes along and I realize it is OK to hate NFG. I don't have to appreciate Good Charlotte or Simple Plan. Good punk is still out there and with extreme guerrilla marketing the kids are hearing it. The Silence are not signed to any label, but they have their own army. The corporate music world hasn't heard them, but over 30,000 kids have their CD. They are a shining example of DIY and having great music is just a bonus on top. The Silence incorporates hardcore, emo, punk, indie and everything in between to create a solid mix of genres. Their blend of music fits together better than the red light district and window shopping. Their debut album is a sleek machine that knows where it is going and knows what it needs to do to get there. Singer/screamer Steve Juliano says that he "could not care less if kids think we are punk rock or hardcore or whatever. I care that the songs are good." Forgetting about the image and focusing on the songs has created one of the strongest albums of the year. Who cares about the right tattoos and blue hair when the music is this good? By spanning so many genres The Silence can rope in a much bigger listening audience. That bigger audience will eventually lead to some big crowds for The Silence and, most likely, some major label recognition. So Silence, if you are ever on stage with Benji after you go big, let him know he doesn't have my blessing anymore or kick him in the teeth. Your choice.
www.thesilencemusic.com

Pete Soyer

Various Artists
"The Sound of San Francisco"
(ALIVE)

This not merely a sample of San Francisco bands. Each track here was recorded especially for this release. The selected band converges on a '60's-inspired edgy garage rock feel. Whether it be The Coachwhips, Big Midnight or Black Cat Music, the sound is reminiscent of the amorphous proto-punk groups of the late '60s that were primitive and stripped-down. Any of these could be a long-lost, highly sought-after collectible from that era of Flamin' Groovies and Television. So, get this now, because these bands are going to be just as sought after.

www.alive-totalenergy.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

The Forecast
"Proof of Impact"
(THINKER THOUGHT)

The Forecast offer nothing new and fail to step outside, if only for a brief moment, from the circle that holds every other middle course Midwest emocore band. Poor production quality doesn't help the band's off-key harmonies, textbook crunchy guitar riffs and weak hooks. Their use of the loud/soft dynamic is pathetic and embarassing. This band should have never left their parents' basement, let alone step into a studio. Trite, heartfelt lyrics don't help the situation: "I want you to know / How extraordinary you are and / How much I want to have / Because of that," ...struggles to sing while accompanied by accoustic guitar. The Forecast is one of thousands of bands that never should have been.

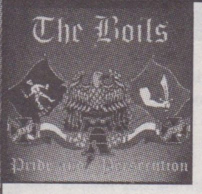
Jeff Skruck

The Revolt
"Self-Titled"
(SELF-RELEASED)

The Revolt have a sound that reminds me of the days when hair spray and spandex pants were totally rock and roll. Now by no way is that a bad thing, in fact some of the coolest songs were from that era. These guys are straight ahead rock and roll plain and simple. With great hooks and melodies, The Revolt will make you wanna enjoy a couple beers with the boys on a Saturday night. Unfortunately I didn't get a whole lot of information on these guys and going to their site didn't help me a whole lot either. If you're into the whole 80's scene or just good straight ahead rock and roll then definitely check out The Revolt.

www.therevolt.net

James Wright

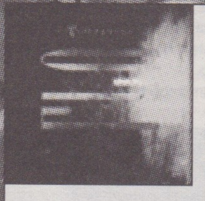


The Boils
"Pride and Persecution"
(TKO)

Yawn. How can music so fast be so boring? I think the best analogy comes to us by way of Valencia, CA, and Magic Mountain. Take two rides, say Goliath, with its unreal twisting, turning, dropping, corkscrewing action and Superman, the park's fastest ride. Goliath is plenty quick, but it's the mind-numbing twists and turns and uncertainty about what's around the next corner that makes you scream and rush back into line for more. Superman, like The Boils, blasts you out of the gate at an incredible speed in a straight line, up the side of the track, then directly backs down to where you started. You can plainly see where you started and where you're going and the ride is over almost as soon as it's begun. Fun? Not really. The Boils are as straightforward as that waste of a coaster. (Blue collars flashing proudly from the gutter). The raucous guitars and gritty lyrics (a combo of beer, buddies, and generic socialist sentiments) never progress much beyond clichéd East Coast sing-along anthems. Don't throw your time away on this attraction; wait in line for something with a little more brains. Like a merry-go-round or a really big speed bump.

www.theboils.com

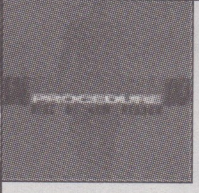
Brian Greenaway



Frontline Assembly
"Civilization"
(METROPOLIS)

Stark, beat driven electronic arrangements that still retain a sense of 'song'. A more somber Thrill Kill Kult comes to mind (but I've been listening to a lot of that lately, so I hear their influence in everything with a keyboard and a sassy dark beat). Frontline Assembly is darker, but weave a lot of softer sounds into their beats so it's not assaulting. Female vocals make their appearance to even further temper the machine-like quality that persists throughout the release. Mid-tempo seems to be the favored pace. Never hurried, nor dragging... more like drifting along the same the ideas, wrapping them up in layers of whispered lyrics and dully moaned verses. Most music like this strikes me as very cinematic and would make great background scores to many indie art flicks. The dark smooth vibe that defines Frontline Assembly is what the band mostly draws upon, although the short, but quirky and ambitious track "Strategic" is a challenging, frenetic display of bubbling synth, echoing samples and a rhythmic composition that should impress most any fan of the programmable beat. Frontline Assembly comes across as both accomplished and significant, which are both esteemed qualities in a genre that has every PC jockey proclaiming himself a "DJ". This is also good, slow paced sex music. Smooth and lulling and you should get easily lost in it's hypnotic waves. I don't know if that was the bands intention, but hey, you use your music the way you want to, and I'll get some soft-core bondage with mine.

Bushman



The Procedure
"Rise of New Reason"
(BRIGHTSIDE/BLACKOUT!)

I met this guy the other day that was so stoked that he was into Thursday before everyone else was into Thursday. I guess we all do the same thing. I mean, when everyone's like, "Oh, have you heard the new Bananarama album? They are sooo good." I'll be all, "Pusha. I liked those guys since "Karate Kid part I", bitch." Anyway, ex-Thursday guitarist Bill Henderson's new project The Procedure probably won't have many people claiming they've liked them "ever since..." but it's not that bad. "Rise of New Reason" combines a lot of Ensign and This Day Forward influences, with the heavy guitars and shouted vocals, but there's something noticeably missing from the majority of the dozen tracks. What, exactly, is that lacking ingredient? Vocal variation, my dear friend. While I love the screamed shout as much as the next yahoo, I don't want to be bombarded with the same raggedly pitched, gruff-assed shout over and over again. Take a brutally screamed song like Thursday's "Cross Out the Eyes" for example. What makes the song so memorable is undoubtedly the breathless yell, yet only when it's contrasted against the softer, varied elements. "Rise of New Reason" has enough of those fist in the air moments to stoke you out, but not enough to make you want to listen to it again.

www.theprocedure.com

Brian Greenaway

30 Years War
"Under the Gun"
(SUBSTANDARD)

30 Years War rages an all-out verbal assault against your senses in this blistering little six-track EP. Full of screamed vocals and old school hardcore sounds, these Santa Cruz locals rail against the political powers that be and the socio-economic mess they've created. All at about ten billion beats per second. Tracks like "Colors Of" and its thunderous, "Red hate and white noise / And the blue drone of the airwaves / Confirms my contempt" will leave your head reeling and your mind full. If you think speed-core bands like Heroin are the bee's knees, then "Under the Gun" should be on your list. If you're looking for variation and harmony, then look somewhere else. This is the shortest review I've ever written.

www.30yearswar.com

Brian Greenaway

Electronic Barnacle Island
"Deeply Faulted Area Resembling an Upright Deck of Cards"
(KIRAKIRA DISC)

Aaron Noel entirely composed and performed the music of "Deeply Faulted Area Resembling an Upright Deck of Cards". The instrumental electronic music is an interesting juxtaposition of floating, will-o-the-wisp melodies and angular rhythms. Noel claims George Winston as well as the early work of Vangelis and Tangerine Dream among his influences, so this explains the eerie, melancholy melodies. The post-industrial, mechanical beats are of a more contemporary stripe.

www.KiraKiraDisc.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

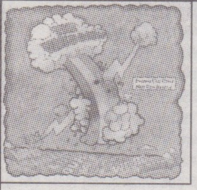
THREATS
TWELVE PUNK MOVES

The Threats
"Twelve Punk Moves"
(DR. STRANGE)

I doubt anybody outside of Scotland has really been waiting for a Threats reunion, much less a new album, but here it is. While they still play competent oi-punk with a bit of the metal kick bands like GBH and The Exploited circa 1985 added, it definitely doesn't provide any fresh angles on "punk". I doubt these guys are doing anything more than just having a good time, but it's kind of silly if they really take any of their tired punk rhetoric to heart and/or expect anybody else to. These literally are just "moves". And, yes, twelve of them.

www.drstrangerecords.com

Zack



The Unicorns
"Who Will Cut Our Hair When We're Gone?"
(ALIEN 8)

The Unicorns have a cool vibe goin'. From their cover artwork to the clever song titles to the dancing style disco punk that they're rockin'. Music that makes you dance is the way to be going these days and The Unicorns are doing it. There is something original happening on The Unicorns latest album. Moments of odd experimentation with the use of keyboards and manipulation of drum tones will be something that you haven't heard before. Every song on "Who Will Cut Our Hair When We're Gone" has a different feel and incorporates a different musical angle. The mood is always changing and makes the listener wonder what the next song is going to sound like. A breath of fresh air from all the repetitive shit that we are all subject to on a daily basis. If you're in the mood for some upbeat dance rock I would highly recommend picking up The Unicorns. It will make you happy.

www.the-unicorns.com

Thom C.

Humble Gods

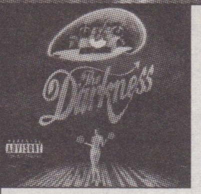
"Born Free"

(SUBURBAN NOIZE)

Before Kottonmouth Kings were a thought in the back of Daddy X's head, Humble Gods were his main focus. Now years after disbanding, the group has reformed to record 16 new punk rock classics to drop on the scene. There are some truly classic moments on "Born Free" like the opening to the title track that samples the Ramones as Daddy X explains Dee Dee still owes him $300 for weed; funny shit. A lot of the songs deal with topics like media manipulation, loss of friends and just how fucked up society has become. Songs like "Fools Paradise" show that X isn't afraid to operate outside of what most would consider "punk rock" and the material is just as fucking good. This record is just another example of why I think Brad X is truly one of our generation's most underrated songwriters. Essential listening.

www.humblegods.com

James Wright



The Darkness

"Permission to Land"

(ATLANTIC)

Everybody is talking about this fucking band from England like they are the second coming of rock and roll. I love the rock and roll. It don't matter if it's new or old, if it smokes, bring it on. The disc kicks off with a slightly amped up Dirty Deeds riff (ala AC/DC) and it ends up honing in on more of a Kiss dynamic for its "Black Shuck" chorus (I can just hear a nation a mullet heads mistakenly screaming "Black Shark!" in unison). Track No.2 has an Urge Overkill guitar jam that kicks enough ass, but singer Justin Hawkins really shows his "range" as he comes in with this super high falsetto (read: someone just kicked him in the balls REAL hard) screaming "Get your hands off of my woman, motherfucker!" That would be so great in real life. Some guy is moving in on your chick, so you stroll over all tough like, and in your best girlie-girl high voice scream: "Get your hands off of my woman, motherfucker!" and see what kind of response you get. I would guess that confused look straight guys get when they realize they just walked into a gay bar. Which is the same feeling I got the first time I listened to The Darkenss. Sure, the guitar is so righteous, it took about 10 seconds to know it rocked on some level. But you GOTTA hear this Hawkins guy. He's a rock star for sure, but I wasn't sure if the world was playing one of those musical jokes on me. You know the one, where everyone tells you this band is so fucking cool, so you get the album and you are like, huh? And then you secretly suspect all your friends are sitting around going, "hahahah, he's probably at home actually listening to it! Here, let's see if we can convince him that the band Jet didn't just blatantly rip off that Iggy Pop song." So the first two tracks here rock, and after a few listens, I can sorta dig the weird charm of what Hawkins is doing. But then the track "Growing On Me", eh... sounds like the bad-era Cheap Trick. That's when the music gets too charmingly cheesy and Hawkins feels the need to match that with some vocal acrobatics that sound like Tiny Tim attempting to do a Ted Nugent impression. It's totally fucking bizarre. Just play "I Believe In A Thing Called Love" in a crowded room sometime and watch the heads turn as people go "What the hell is this?!" (and that's the single!). Unless, that is, they've already been hanging out with my friends, in which case they'll chime in "Dude, The Darkness... They rock so hard! They are totally cool." as they watch the faces of everyone else trying to act like they think so to. But I do keep listening to this for some reason. I hit "skip" a lot, but in it keeps going. "Love On The Rocks With No Ice", that's fucking clever. You know what, The Darkness totally kicks ass dude. They are the second coming of rock. (*Looks over shoulder and grins at friends). *ps - Jack Black... probably has a small shrine in his house to this band. They sound like his rock and roll wet dream).

Bushman

Landmine Spring

"Are We the Culprits?"

(CANDLELIGHT)

Seventy-five percent metal and twenty-five percent hardcore, Landmine Spring tears through "Are We the Culprits?" with all of the subtlety of a wet fart. A really, really long wet fart. I mean, who's got the time to grind through five minutes of raw noise? Not this gangsta. And while you're at it, could you tell your producer to turn the vocals up a bit? Doesn't anybody mix these things? Who is the damn culprit anyway? Lots of anger here, which, as we all know, leads to the dark side and also leads to me jabbing the skip button with frequent regularity. I think I just need a little more pep in my metalcore, not just the same old crashing din of discordant madness, you know? I think you do. I don't think you want the same old business of metal bands traipsing about the nu-metal boundary and thinking they can get away with it. You know what I mean, yeah? Maybe these guys are the UK's best metal band, but that's like being the top bullfighter in Alaska. Go away.

www.landmine-spring.co.uk

Brian Greenaway

Dub Narcotic Sound System

"Degenerate Introduction"

(K)

It seems that not even a massive car accident can stop the machine that is the Dub Narcotic Sound System! After being involved in a major car crash while on tour last year, the members of the Dub Narcotic Sound System were hospitalized and have since bounced back to full form on their latest release "Degenerate Introduction." The hipster blues swagger that has always been at the heart of all Dub Narcotic albums is still heavily present on "Degenerate Introduction". While K Records chief Calvin Johnson tackles main duty on the microphone, his ever-supportive rhythm section lays down the beats as he croons away with his strange brand of campfire sing-along songs. "Degenerate Introduction" is another notch in the belt for Pacific Northwest blues-rock, and definitely an album you and your friends should be dancing to, like the little hipsters you know you are!

www.krecs.com

Gordon Downs

Wumpscut

"Preferential Legacy & Music for a German Tribe"

(METROPOLIS)

I'm a yellow flower all comfy in my world of happy sunshine. Ahh, so happy! Hmm? What's that on the horizon?! Oh, no it's Wumpscut! AHHH! (2 seconds pass) Now I'm a shadow burned on a rock from the nuclear blast that is their music. A wonderful 2-disc set, perfect for those of us who would like to indulge in a finer example of agro-industrial music with a definite flair for keeping industrial separate from the gothic bullshit that somehow gets lumped in with this genre. This is a great introduction to industrial music in its finest form. Unbelievable samples, machinery at every turn, drum beats from every sort of metal you can imagine, even interjections of piano, and a vocalist who's voice encompasses a sort of torture and despair rarely seen in such a beautiful way. Two new tracks, old favorites, original versions, and new remixes of the band's library cover both discs with a fierce noise.

www.metropolis-records.com

Sean Dietrich

Dear John Letters

"Stories of Our Lives"

(FOODCHAIN)

Dear John Letters once again prove that some of the most inspiring musicians come from the Seattle area. It's a cool idea to have a band that bases their material on what you might find in a letter between friends. I guess Robb Benson has even used his friend's letters as lyrics for his songs on previous efforts. This is one of those really big finds that could break any day. Much like a letter between lovers or friends there is a whole range of emotions on this album from lust to loneliness and confusion to reconciliation. "Sorry To Sorry" has a chorus that is easy to sing-a-long to and the flamenco guitar solo is awesome.

www.foodchainrecords.com

Tom

Hella / Dilute

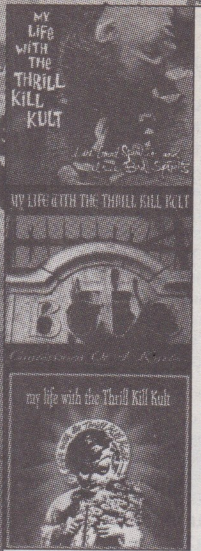
"Live Spilt EP"

(SICKROOM)

Two of the west coats' most engaging bands captured exquisitely on this one double disc offering! Hailing from the Bay Area of San Francisco and Oakland, dilute is one of the brighter stars on the horizon of instrumental rock. Backed by the multi talented Jay Pellici on drums, dilute's music is at times intricately beautiful and strangely arousing in the sense of how unabashed rock and roll can make you feel. The other half of this spilt EP comes from the Sacramento, California noise duo currently making waves as Hella. A somewhat improvisational and free jazz/punk outfit, Spencer Seim and Zach Hill sound as if they're lost in a Zen-like trance as they pound away through their songs like jazz musicians caught in a wave of distortion. Their thrashing sound and brutal guitar riffs are definitely an acquired taste, as Hella's sound can best be described as schizophrenic music for an unjust world. Enter the second portion of this album at your own risk! Hella is band that shan't be messed with! Headphones listeners use caution!

www.sickroomrecords.com

Gordon Downs


MY LIFE WITH THE THRILL KILL KULT
MY LIFE WITH THE THRILL KILL KULT
my life with the Thrill Kill Kult

My Life With The Thrill Kill Kult

"I See Good Spirits, I see Bad Spirits"
"Confessions of a Knife"
"Self-Titled (aka Kooler Than Jesus"
(RYKODISC)

Bred from the late eighties/early nineties Chicago scene, this two-piece put a serious mark on the whole industro-glam-dance-disco-sex movement. Where fellow Chicago techno-with-an-edge lovers Ministry went with a more abrasive rock attack, MLWTTKK took a left turn at some B-horror movie, sexed it up, fed it some hard drugs and gave the whole thing a dark yet danceable element that put a shine on the black humor. Satan, drugs, Christianity, sex, zombies and **vampires are the general** themes. Sometimes you get all of that wrapped up in one song (chants of "Christian Zombie Vampires" rings through the classic TKK track "The Days Of Swine and Roses"). Lot's of great voice samples are looped in the beats to give many tracks a twisted, cinematic feel ("I live for drugs... It's great.... I freaked out very very badly.... I freaked out... on Acid... I live for drugs... It's great... It's great... I'm the white rabbit"). Combined with psychedelic live shows with performance artists and stage vixens, the whole thing is just electronic-sassy-coolness. Rykodisc just re-released three definitive Thrill Kill Kult releases. Scattered across the three new discs are a total of 12 new tracks! (3 extra on each of the first two, and 6 extra on their self-titled release). The influence of this band can be heavily felt in many of today's laptop DJs, but respect the timeframe in which these were originally conceived. It was during the death of glam, but pre-grunge, (and carried through post-grunge if anyone is keeping track) that this band released the bulk of their material. So appreciate this for the landmark in the genre that it is. All conveniently, repackaged, remixed and re-released for your easy listening pleasure. Although not really a "box-set", you could buy them all together and just kind of pretend. Turn on the black light, get the strobe clicking, crank some of this and the Sexeteria is open!

Bushman

Murder Weapon

"Nervous Wreck"
(MARTYR)

At a time when even Agnostic Front can't seem to get their meathead hardcore sound back together again (c'mon? Dead Yuppies? Lame, but at least they've never had a problem with the "meathead" part - just listen to Roger Miret's solo album) along comes Murder Weapon with all of the anger, piss and venom of One Voice... plus a few pounds of guitar chunk. Searing with the heated attack that only a hungry young band can offer, this unit pummels all opposition via their old school New York sound. Naturally, it's packed to the tits with circle pit breakdowns and chant-a-longs so we're all gonna get hooked inevitably. The best part about this album: it means there's someone new to pass the hardcore torch to.

www.martyrrecords.com

Keith Carman

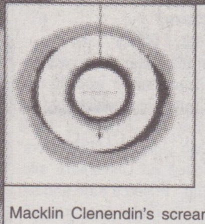
The Backup Plan

"Dearest Whomever..."
(NEW DAY RISING)

There's a lot to like about The Backup Plan. I mean, they play really fast, really clean power-punk, sort of like Good Riddance, only most of their songs are about girls. The Backup Plan employ the growingly popular "one guys screams and one guy sings" technique to quite a bit of success, as the tortured, screaming vocals carry so much venom on tracks such as, "I Broke Your Heart and All I Got Was This Lousy T-Shirt" and "Even the Mona Lisa is Falling Apart". The relentlessly savage vocals get a bit stale by track five, as the belligerent assault seems to be a little unwavering in its intensity. While some of the elder statesmen of the genre have managed to incorporate a little variety into their acts, The Backup Plan are happily content to pound their life away in a deafening barrage of heavy hooks. Lyrically, TBP are inventively cruel, coming up with such gems as, "We are dial tone hesitation, we are the wayward hearts, death wishes and fresh stitches won't get you home tonight." and "I've been doing a bad impression of myself and you're so inventive when you're got a tale to tell." You'll dig it, I swear.

www.thebackupplan.net

Brian Greenaway



Under A Dying Sun

"Supernova"
(SUBSTANDARD)

Seems like Under a Dying Sun have been together forever, huh? I remember these guys when they were emocore before anybody else was emocore, working their guitars into nice harmonies, augmenting Macklin Clenendin's screamed vocals. Well, those days are gone. "Supernova" finds the guys (and gal-Shaye Farwell rips on bass) seeking a more mature sound, discarding the melodies and complementary guitars for a harsher, more angular sound. While this works fairly well and gives the album an almost experimental feel, what it really serves to do is draw more attention to Clenendin's droning voice. While his screams seemed to blend in rather well with their older material, UaDS's new sound means that Clenendin's Paris-Hilton-thin yelps don't fit in as well as they used to. Still, it's a nice attempt at change and the eight-track EP will surely find its share of fans.

www.underadyingsun.com

Brian Greenaway

VERY APE
kosher boogie

Very Ape

"Kosher Boogie"
(ALIVE)

The whole raw rock and roll sound doesn't seem to want to go away. Sounding like a good local band you'd hear playing around town, Very Ape aim to up your dosage of good old rock and roll. Problem being, there's nothing dangerous about this band at all. While songs like the title track "Kosher Boogie" may rock, they're still missing that element of danger that will push their songs over the edge and into everyone's heads. If you're into classic rock you'll find some solid guitar riffage here with an old school/stoner rock singer that croons throughout the 11 tracks. Not a bad start but nothing spectacular either.

www.veryape.com

James Wright

Majhas

"Stepping Into Character"
(HAWTHORNE STREET)

I never knew hardcore indie rock could get so pissed off. Scattered and loud, with a beat driven straight through the middle, the guitars are in need of some therapy to find themselves. But this is a good thing. That sense of 'barely-in-control' works well for Majhas. The vocalist thinks he's in a hardcore band, but this unit is so much more than the influences they wear on their sleeves. Majhas has a fascination with dissonance. Between the assaulting songs, often the listener is dosed on ringing guitars, distorted feedbacks and instruments pounded on just to hear the reverberation wobble and fade... just to set up another attack of crawling, angry hardcore/indie/mathrock. The band would be twenty times better with a singer that could match the diversity of the rest of the band, but he's got the harsh scraping bark down well enough. Lyric sheets are included. Thanks. What's worth mentioning is the many drastic tangents the band is willing to indulge in (see the mellow indie pickings on the extended intro of 'Nola Heat' backed by a scratchy radio in the background) before the inevitable crash into something louder and most certainly aggressive. And when it skulks around the indie rock territory more than the hardcore attack, that's when these guys really shine. Majhas does an admirable job of blending a lot together and making their own sound out of it, rather than just cut and pasting song parts together like so many of the indie/metal/hardcore hybrids. It's that ability to keep surprising you, without actually shifting gears into a whole new vibe that allows this unit to rise above the limitations put on the band by the singer. It's heavy. It's different. It's worthy.

Bushman

THUNDERBIRDS ARE NOW!

Thuderbirds Are Now!

"Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief"
(ACTION DRIVER)

Thuderbirds are Now! is fast, unorganized, chaotic and near perfect. They have taken progressive rock, gotten it drunk, dressed it up in a clown suit and rolled it down hills until it can't even stand. After a night of partying with progressive rock they kept it in its vomit covered clown suit and have used all of its influences here. "Doctor, Lawyer, Indian Chief" feels the way a kid who has constant seizures would sound playing every instrument in a high school band room at once. Not since the Volumen of Missoula, MT, have I heard such an experimental sound that you may shy away from at first listen, but go back to later. Everything on this disc is fun and creative. These guys never take themselves too seriously. Early Dismemberment Plan can be heard influencing Thunderbirds throughout the disc. Their song titles seem like punchlines to jokes the listeners aren't in on, but they work all the same. "KGB phone sexxx," "Kitchen ORGY", "When it Comes to Elements, Hydrogen is Titz" and "Babygirl, I Got Ten Kids (Lets Not Make it Eleven)" are just some of the titles that bring a grin across my face because somewhere in my adolescent life I had the same jokes that were only funny to me and my friends. And Hydrogen seriously is the best element out there.

www.skylinememoirs.com/tan.com

Pete Soyer

Lazarus

"Songs For and Unborn Son"
(TEMPORARY RESIDENCE)

Solo work by Trevor Montogmery of the Drift and Tarentel. This is really mellow, melancholy, singer-songwriter stuff given a kind of electro-ambient, post-rock treatment. Think Elliot Smith, if he was from Chicago. These are good, sad songs. Occasionally recalls Seattle's now-defunct Carrisa's Weird, but super stripped down. Depressing in a good way. The only thing that really bums me out about this CD is the painfully hack Egon Schiele artwork all over the thing. Hasn't that guy been bitten by enough undergrad art students and ex-graffiti guys yet?

www.lazarusland.com

Zack

Goatwhore

"Funeral Dirge for the Rotting Sun"

(ROTTEN)

How much metal is too much metal? Is there even such a thing? Not being a big connoisseur of the genre, I'm often at a disadvantage when it comes to the wailing of guitars and gnashing of teeth. Yet here we are again, listening to a death metal band called Goatwhore in all of their black glory. The thing to remember about these metal bands is that they are serious about their music, for all of its clichéd metaphors and predicable lyrics. As such, acts like Goatwhore succeed in making a technically correct, savagely feral release, albeit one that sounds similar to the other standard-bearers of their craft. The majority of "Funeral Dirge" is made up of depression-laden sentiments, salved by savage screams and occasional forays into a sludgy, Southern hardcore. For the most part, however, Goatwhore remains true to the genre, which is both the effort's strength and its Achilles heel. All of the talk of demons and dark rituals and tortured souls ensures that Goatwhore will finish highly in the great Metal Pissing Contest of Anger and Despair.

www.goatwhore.net

Brian Greenaway

The Mars Volta

"Televators"

(UNIVERSAL / GSL)

So I'm on the webpage www.theprp.org, a 'music news' website that I check out every week or so. Seems that the new The Mars Volta music video for "Televators" was released on Universal's site. It's pretty tight, and well worth watching. Pulled a tube and sat with it cranked... the song "Televators" is really quite magnificent, a delicate barrage of prog-like rock ballet guitar and drums, all the while vocalist Cedric croons his way back to Led Zepplin times. It sorta reminds me of the song, "Planet Caravan" but for different reasons. This single disc was released only in Australia, and features the LP version of Televators, the live-at-XMRadio recorded "Roulette Dares" and "Drunkship of Lanterns" and two live-in-London songs, "Cicatriz Esp" and again "Televators". If you're a Mars Volta fan, it's definitely worthy... when has a single been almost 49 minutes long? If you don't know The Mars Volta, go buy their full length album, "De-loused in the Comatorium".

www.themarsvolta.com

pr!

DARKEST DAY OF HORROR

Mortician

"Darkest Day of Horror"

(RELAPSE)

Jeeves walks into the parlor and asks you, "A large heaping of grinding gore-core for you, sir?" If you answer your man servant Jeeves with a big resounding, "Why yes, Jeeves! I'd love a gargantuan dose of the corpsely grind!" then Mortician is just the right band for you. They grind; they blast; they sing like Welsh men gargling gravel. The band consists of two members (or is that dismembers?) one of whom plays bass and performs vocals as the other plays guitar and programs drums. Uh-oh! You say you don't like drum programming? That nothing can top the organic grace of a real live bloke behind the kit? Well, sir, I'd have to agree with you, but for the sake of argument I'll have to say that the drum programming on this grind-core record works out just as good if not better than if they had a human drummer. My guess is that these two fellas who make up Mortician are either totally unpleasant to work with and can't find anyone else or they simply enjoy being a two-piece. The songs themselves are non-technical and straightforward, sometimes slower paced but more often than not it's a blast-o-rama of faster than thou computer generated beats. The album is loaded with lots of fun samples that sound like they come from 1980s straight to video schlock-horror fests. It adds to the good gory atmosphere. By the way, I just checked out their web site and it looks like they scored a drummer. So it's too late for you if you were looking for a cool gig.

www.mortician.net

DICK

Hoobastank

"The Reason"

(ISLAND)

Do you own a copy of Hoobastank's debut record? Do you like Hoobastank? If you answered yes to either of the following then you'll probably want to purchase "The Reason". This album is almost fucking identical to the band's debut. The only difference between this record and their last is they threw in some strings and acoustic guitars on a couple tracks. This band does a pretty good job imitating Incubus, but why not just buy an Incubus album? It's amazing how a band can essentially recycle their first record and get away with it.

www.hoobastank.com

James Wright

Super Furry Animals

"Phantom Power"

(XL RECORDINGS / BEGGARS GROUP)

When it comes to Super Furry Animals you must remember one thing: as bad as you might think it sounds, you can make terrific tracks by mixing transient drum and bass with full-on twangy harmonica rock. However, where in most bands this would be their whole bag of tricks, Super Furry Animals continues to amaze with the types of sounds they'll pair up. The list of unholy, but holy musical marriages goes on. Most tracks on "Phantom Power" are sure to include ambient orchestras and quiet, clean guitars that keep the melody of the songs going. Then the slide guitar is beautifully mixed with straight up beats and changed again mid-song to become a multi-dimensional rock song ending with a lonesome trumpet. These comparisons get into a little of the history of this band because like Beck Hansen, Super Furry Animals have never made an album that sounds the same. You have 1996's highly acclaimed "Fuzzy Logic", with an orchestra of strings and brass, the emotional and depressing "Radiator", and the album featuring Paul McCartney making the sounds of eating a carrot during the seminal 60's flower-pop-meets-death-metal "Rings Around The World". SFA's lead singer Gruff Rhys has been quoted as jokingly saying "We could have gotten Paul McCartney singing like a Beatle, but we got him to chew some carrots and celery", which is just fucking classic. Once more, the band releases DVD audio discs with original videos for each song. Brittan's best-kept secret, make them yours!

Tom

Alchemist

"Austral Alien"

(RELAPSE)

This is the best band you've never heard. A Middle Eastern vibe infused with Sepultura-like tribalism is hammered into a relief of rough-hewn heavy metal with tendencies towards the meditatively spacey. If that description of their sound doesn't make any sense it's because their song writing is slippery, slimy, wet and defies one who attempts to get a firm grip on it. The vocals are gruff, but nowhere near death metal. The songs build up with a steady unnerving intensity that makes my heart quicken right along with its methodical march to greater and greater power. This is a must-have for anyone who wants to explore. Recommended for fans of obscure metal who want something cool to play for their lame-o numetal listening pals.

Dick

DIMMU BORGIR

Dimmu Borgir

"Death Cult Armageddon"

(NUCLEAR BLAST)

Absolutely monstrous in its presentation and sound. Gigantic orchestration makes every last crunchy guitar riff ring out with twice as much intensity and urgency as it otherwise would have carried all on its lonesome. Dimmu Borgir is at the top of their game, the black metal game. I adore the clean singing vocals as much as the perfected growls. This is a delight of the genre and an absolute must-have. Full of guts. It is definitely full of guts and more than just a little daring. If you liked their last album, then you ought to like this one even more. The new one doesn't exactly pick up where the last one left off since it is better written and by a band far superior, with a far greater vision than the band who put out the last album a couple years ago. They should wash their faces though.

Dick

The Cuts

"2 Over Ten"

(BIRDMAN)

The members of The Cuts are in tight with early rock sounds allowing them to present original material that could be out of the Alex Chilton songbook or a set by The Zombies. Much is also made of a vocal similarity to Tom Verlaine (Television). The band's melodic rock builds on acoustic guitars and a bright-sounding percussion ala the '60s AM pop that arose out of England's mod scene, such as The Who and Small Faces. Excellently produced by Greg Cartwright (The Oblivians, Reigning Sound), "2 Over Ten" is a top-notch album that looks back with a smile.

www.thecuts.com

Tom "Tearaway" Schulte

The Actual

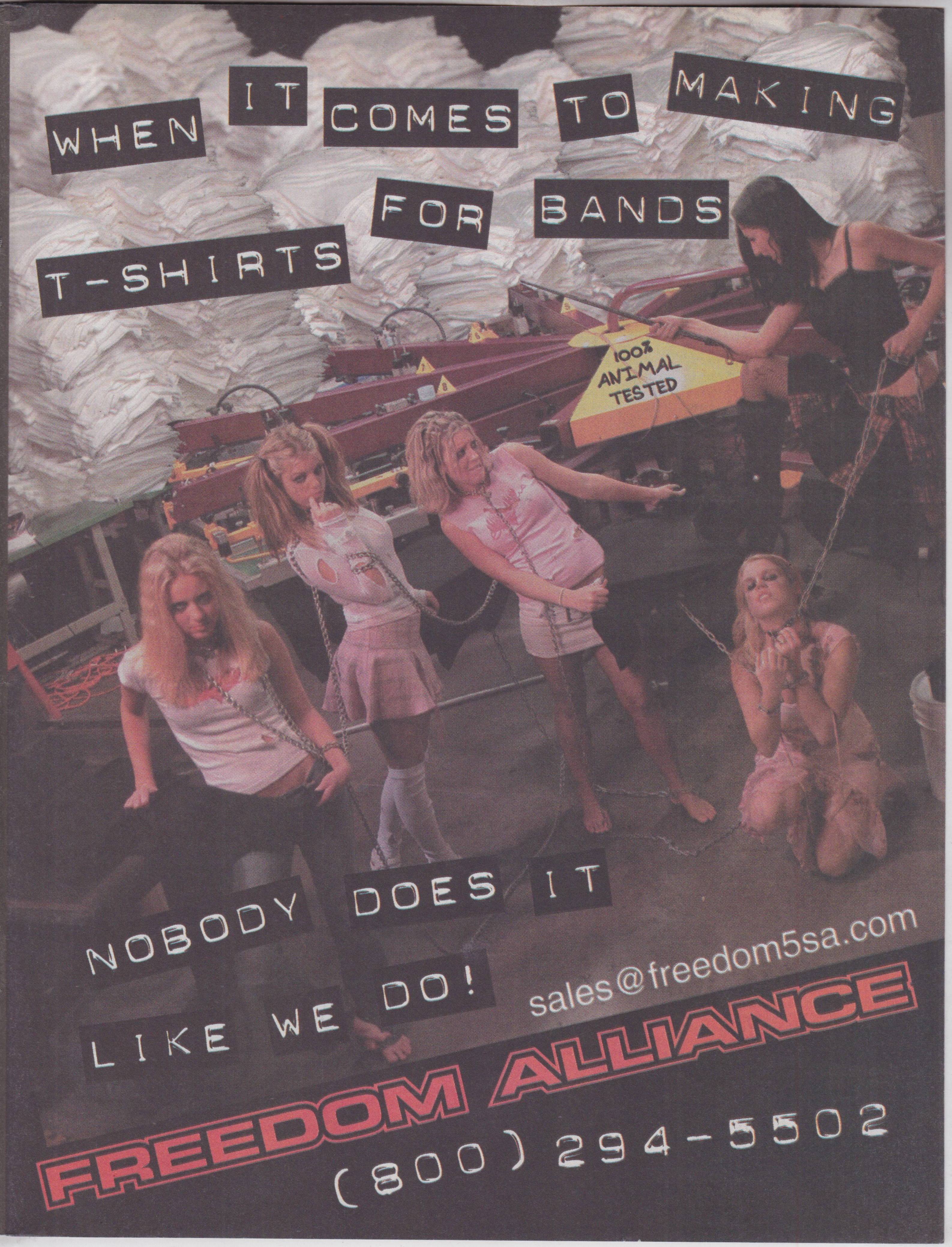
"Songs on Radio Idaho"

(EYEBALL)

Cool, I just found a flask of Jaggermiester in the jacket pocket of the coat I was wearing last night. I have no fuckin' clue where that came from but it's a pleasant surprise. I'm just gonna throw that badboy in the freezer for a few and I'll be ready to kick off Saturday night. You know what's way less exciting? The Actual. Boring pop rock, I'd be surprised if they even played this on Idaho radio. Idaho's got better shit going on, like potatoes, an interesting shape and close proximity to Canada. This ho-hum release from The Actual is manufactured pop at its cookie-cutterest. Vocals aren't bad but are far from original, the music seems to be the same tempo the whole time. The changes and hooks are predictable and will not make you feel special. Well, the sun has gone down, I'm weary of "Songs on Idaho Radio" and I've got a little something waitin' for me in the freezer.

www.eyeballrecords.com

Thom C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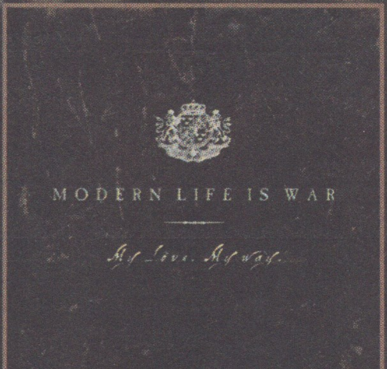

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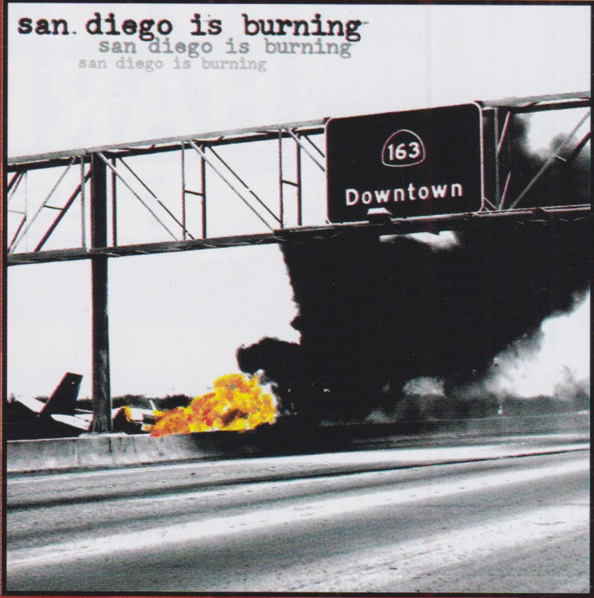
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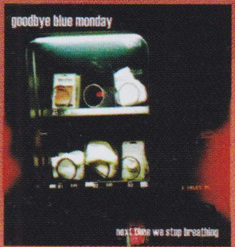
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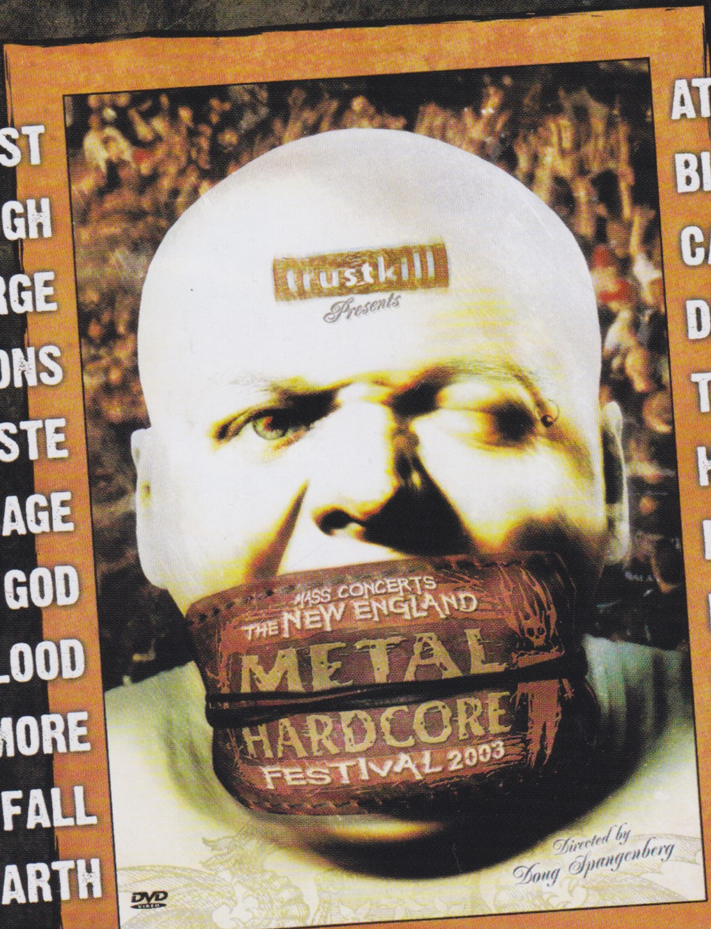

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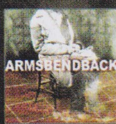
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